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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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**FOR THE FALLEN**

Okinawa Marines memorialize comrades during Warrior Challenge

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**US, Afghan friendly fire kills at least 5**

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan soldiers at a checkpoint in the country's southern Uruzgan province fired on a patrol of their own troops and American advisers, leading to a firefight and an airstrike that left at least five Afghan soldiers dead and nine wounded on Wednesday, military officials in Kabul said.

No Americans were killed or wounded in the incident, said a spokesman for NATO's Resolute Support mission.

The firefight was a result of a lack of communication between Afghan forces, a senior Defense Ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Afghan forces and their U.S. advisers were conducting a planned night raid when they approached the Afghan National Army checkpoint near the town of Tirin Kot, the capital of Uruzgan province.

"Our forces on the ground, they didn't know about this fact; they started shooting," the official said.

**SEE FIREFIGHT ON PAGE 7**



PHOTOS BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II/Stars and Stripes

Marines assigned to 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion paddle in a small boat drill event during the Warrior Challenge honoring the unit's fallen Marines at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, on Friday. Inset: Marines place their hands on a monument dedicated to fallen Marines.

## Soldier who sacrificed himself to save companions to receive Medal of Honor

By CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — An Army staff sergeant who saved the lives of three other soldiers in Iraq by diving onto a suicide bomber will be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the White House announced Tuesday.

Family members of Staff Sgt. Travis Atkins, a 10th Mountain Division squad leader, are scheduled to

join President Donald Trump for the service slated for March 27 to commemorate Atkins' selfless service and sacrifice, the White House said.

Atkins, a Bozeman, Mont., native, was killed in action on June 1, 2007, while his unit — Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team 0151 — conducted route clearance southwest of Baghdad, according to an Army account of the incident.

During the mission, Atkins, 31, heard a report over the radio of suspected insurgents crossing an intersection in the Iraqi town of Abu Samak, the Army said.

As truck commander in his Humvee, Atkins ordered the driver to stop the vehicle at the intersection so they could intercept the suspected insurgents, according to the Army. Atkins approached one of the men to check him for weapons, but when Atkins

attempted to search him, the man resisted. As the two men fought, the insurgent reached for an explosive vest under his clothing. Atkins grabbed the suicide bomber from behind with a bear hug and slammed him to the ground, away from the other soldiers standing only a few feet from the fight. As he pinned the insurgent to the ground, the bomb detonated.

Atkins was killed by the blast.

**SEE MEDAL ON PAGE 4**



Atkins

## PACIFIC

# Marines honor the fallen during Warrior Challenge

BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP SCHWAB, Okinawa — Marines of 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion recently honored fallen members of their unit, some of whom they knew personally, during an annual Warrior Challenge competition.

In teams of six to eight men each, reconnaissance Marines, battalion support troops and Navy corpsmen formed up in the rain at 5:30 a.m. Friday.

Ahead lay 6 miles and eight stations where the teams faced tasks familiar to reconnaissance Marines: intelligence gathering, medical evacuation, weapon assembly and establishing communications, all while running and lugging their 50-pound rucksacks.

Each of the eight teams' rucksacks bore a piece of bright, orange fabric with the name of a fallen Marine stenciled across it in bold, black letters. Some teams carried more than one name.

"The entire event that we are doing is centered around these individuals," Staff Sgt. Brandon Esocchea, an assistant team leader, told Stars and Stripes. "So that whoever looks at us, we don't draw the attention; the name that is on our rucksack is what's drawing the attention."

Marines at the challenge knew some of the fallen whose names names the Warrior Challenge teams carried.

Battalion commander Lt. Col. Sean Barnes served in Iraq with



PHOTOS BY CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II/Stars and Stripes

**Marines assigned to 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion perform push-ups during the Warrior Challenge honoring the unit's fallen Marines at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, on Friday.**

Sgt. Gary S. Johnston, who was killed in action there in 2007. Barnes still has the pamphlet from Johnston's memorial service in his office.

"Today for me is a big deal," Barnes said. "Days like this humble you."

Capt. Ryan Rullman, commander of 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, had served with Cpl. Alejandro Romero, who died last year in a parachute training mishap in Coolidge, Ariz.

"It was awesome to honor him in this way," Rullman said. "The guys are living every day for the guys who went before us."

Staff Sgt. Daniel Mormino, the battalion communications maintenance chief, previously served

with Sgt. Michael Ferschke, who died in 2008 in Iraq.

"These men gave their lives for America, so we carry their name on," Mormino said. "Knowing that you are doing it for the fallen makes you push a little bit harder and endure the pain a little bit more."

At one station, teams had to complete 321 repetitions of seven exercises — push-ups and sit-ups, for example. The military occupational specialty, a four-digit code, for reconnaissance Marine is 0321.

"This is an example of something we like to take a little bit above and beyond," Maj. Andrew A. MacDougall, battalion executive officer, told Stars and Stripes.



A Marine participates in a team swim event during the competition.

"Marines don't like to admit they are special Marines, but there's something pretty special about recon Marines."

At the final station, teams jumped into rubber combat raiding boats, paddled to an ocean buoy, flipped the boat over — demonstrating how to empty the craft in case of flooding — and returned to shore to finish the course.

As the teams crossed the finish line at 3rd Battalion headquarters at Camp Schwab, each team member placed a hand on a monument to Sgt. William Dibble and Cpl. Jose Hernandez. The two Marines drowned in a deep stream on Okinawa while training with 3rd Battalion on Oct. 26, 1982.

The challenge complete, the Ma-

rine, in utility uniforms drenched with sweat and seawater, gathered for photographs with their banners held high. The winning team members' names are etched into a paddle that's displayed at battalion headquarters.

"It's important that we do these events because the guys in the battalion never forget the men who went before them," said Rullman. "It's nice to have this event every single year to give us a reality check and bring us back to why we do this job, who we're doing it for and remembering those Marines for what they have done for us and for their country."

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## MILITARY

## Pentagon sets limits on transgender troops

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has approved a new policy that will largely bar transgender troops and military recruits from transitioning to another sex, and require most individuals to serve in their birth gender.

The memo outlining the new policy was obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press, and it comes after a lengthy and complicated legal battle. It falls short of the all-out transgender ban that was initially ordered by President Donald Trump. But it will likely force the military to eventually discharge transgender individuals who need hormone treatments or surgery and can't or won't serve in their birth gender.

The order says the military services must implement the new policy in 30 days, giving some individuals a short window of time to qualify for gender transition if needed. It allows service secretaries to waive the policy on a case-by-case basis.

Under the new rules, currently serving transgender troops and anyone who has signed an enlistment contract by April 12 may continue with plans for hormone treatments and gender transition if they have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

But after April 12, anyone with gender dysphoria who is taking hormones or has transitioned to another gender will be allowed to enlist. Any currently serving troops diagnosed with gender dysphoria after April 12 will have to serve in their birth gender and will be barred from taking hormones or getting transition surgery.

The memo lays out guidelines for discharging servicemembers based on the new policy. It says a servicemember can be discharged based on a diagnosis of gender dysphoria if he or she is "unable or unwilling to adhere to all applicable standards,



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

**Navy Lt. Cmdr. Blake Dremann, left, testifies about military transgender service policy during a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Feb. 27.**

including the standards associated with his or her biological sex, or seeks transition to another gender."

It adds that troops must be formally counseled and given a chance to change their decision before the discharge is finalized.

In a statement Tuesday night, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the ban "cowardly."

The President's revival of his bigoted, disgusting ban on transgender servicemembers is a stunning attack on the pa-

trons who keep us safe and on the most fundamental standards of our nation," the California Democrat said. "The President's yearslong insistence on his cowardly ban makes clear that prejudice, not patriotism, guides his decisions."

Palm Center, a California research institute, protested the new policy Tuesday. Director Aaron Belkin said, "The Trump administration is determined to bring back 'don't ask, don't tell,' a policy that forced servicemembers to choose between serving their country and telling the truth

about who they were."

The final legal injunction blocking the new policy was lifted last week, allowing the Pentagon to move forward. But restrictions on transgender troops are likely to face ongoing legal challenges and have been slammed by members of Congress as self-defeating.

The memo was signed by David L. Norquist, who is currently serving as the deputy defense secretary.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said in February that barring service by transgender individuals "would cost us recruits at a time when so few Americans are willing to serve." She spoke at a hearing in which transgender troops testified that transitioning to another sex made them stronger and more effective members of the military.

An estimated 14,700 troops on active duty and in the Reserves identify as transgender, but not all seek treatment. Since July 2016, more than 1,500 servicemembers were diagnosed with gender dysphoria; as of Feb. 1, there were 1,071 currently serving. According to the Pentagon, the department has spent about \$8 million on transgender care since 2016. The military's annual health care budget tops \$50 billion.

Last year, all four service chiefs told Congress that they had seen no discipline, morale or unit readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military. But they also acknowledged that some commanders were spending a lot of time with transgender individuals who were working through medical requirements and other transition issues.

The five transgender troops who testified in February said their medical transitions took anywhere from four weeks to four months and they did most of it on their own time. All said they were fit to return to deploying afterward.

## VA chief Wilkie pushes to be next secretary of defense

BY LISA REIN, SEUNG MIN KIM  
AND JOSH DAWSEY  
*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie, whose career has long gravitated to military matters, has promoted himself to the White House to be President Donald Trump's next secretary of defense, according to people familiar with his efforts.

His internal campaign comes as Trump has yet to formally nominate a candidate to replace Jim Mattis, the retired Marine general who quit last December over differences with the president. Mattis' deputy, former Boeing executive Patrick Shanahan, has been auditioning for the role as acting secretary since early January.

Shanahan is widely expected at the Pentagon to be nominated as permanent secretary, but officials have said there's no certainty about his elevation until a White House announcement. The president has been known to change his mind on personnel decisions.

Shanahan's limited foreign policy experience, particularly with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has prompted some uneasiness on Capitol Hill. A few Senate Republicans have openly criticized his unwavering loyalty to the president, particularly on Trump's controversial announcement that he was withdrawing troops from Syria, and questioned whether he could disagree with Trump in private



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

**Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie testifies during a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Feb. 26.**

when appropriate. He did not serve in the military.

Wilkie is in only his eighth month leading Veterans Affairs, which he took over following a tour as undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness at the Pentagon. He has pitched himself to top White House officials as an experienced hand in defense policy and running large bureaucracies, according to an administration official and another person close to the administration who requested anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

Wilkie, 56, often says he was born in "khaki diapers." He is a former Navy reservist and lieutenant colonel in the Air Force reserve and son of a soldier severely

wounded during the Vietnam War. His career has taken him from Senate staffer to the National Security Council and the Pentagon, where he was assistant secretary of defense for legislative affairs in 2006-09.

It's unclear whether Trump has considered him a serious candidate for defense secretary, although the president is said to hold him in high regard.

VA spokesman Curt Cashour said in an email that Wilkie "remains 100 percent focused on his job as VA secretary."

"He is proud to serve the Veterans of this country and is honored to be a part of the record pace of reform at the department under President Trump's leadership," Cashour wrote.

Wilkie is still working to restore morale at the second-largest federal agency after a long period of turmoil under Trump, when a gap in leadership and political infighting led to an exodus of top career staff. Veterans will continue to be a key constituency for the president as he seeks re-election, and the VA is one of the few corners of the government where the proposed budget the White House released Monday included a spending increase.

Wilkie is tackling major challenges for veterans as he balances an administration priority to increase veterans' access to private doctors outside the VA. Democratic lawmakers have criticized him for a lack of transparency in the process.

Wilkie also is overseeing an expensive overhaul to the VA's antiquated medical

records system and an expansion in assistance provided to caregivers for military families.

His staff stumbled last fall when computer problems resulted in delayed or miscalculated housing allowances to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan under the Forever GI Bill. But his reviews overall have been largely positive.

"I think he's a very qualified man," said Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. "I would hate for us to lose him under any circumstance."

The committee's top Democrat, Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, was more blunt, saying that Wilkie's departure would return VA to a state of turmoil.

"That's a problem because you need continuity within the VA," Tester said.

He said he understood why Wilkie might be attracted to the defense position, but "we make a commitment to our veterans, and that VA secretary is an important position. If we don't have a good person there, good things don't happen to our vets. I get it, but I'm very concerned if that's the case."

Shanahan is scheduled to give his first congressional testimony as acting secretary this week, when he is sure to face tough questions about Trump's defense policies. The appearance promises to be a key test for an official whose career has been spent in aviation rather than foreign policy and who would become one of the administration's most visible Cabinet members.

## MILITARY

# Medal: Soldier tackled suicide bomber, shielded others in Iraq

## FROM FRONT PAGE

"When he noticed the insurgent was about to trigger the suicide vest, Staff Sergeant Atkins tackled him, selflessly using his own body to shield his fellow soldiers from the imminent explosion," the White House said in its news release. "Staff Sergeant Atkins' heroic actions, at the cost of his life, saved the lives of three of his teammates."

For his actions, Atkins was initially given the Army's second-highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross, which will be upgraded now to a Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor.

Before Atkins joined the Army, he worked for concrete and painting contractors and as an engine mechanic in Montana, according to the service. He enlisted in the Army in 2000 and attended basic training at Fort Benning in Georgia. He was assigned to Company A, 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), at Fort Campbell, Ky., the White House said.

He was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and later honorably discharged as a sergeant.

Atkins went on to study at the University of Montana before re-enlisting in the Army in 2005. He was assigned to the 10th



Courtesy of the Atkins family

**Then-Sgt. Travis Atkins is seen in Iraq in 2007.**

Mountain Division and deployed to Iraq a second time in August 2006. In May 2007, he was promoted to staff sergeant.

The 10th Mountain Division, which is based at Fort Drum in New York, honored Atkins by naming a fitness center at the installation after him in 2013, the Army said.

During the dedication ceremony, then-Sgt. Aaron Hall, a friend of Atkins, described the staff sergeant as a "quiet professional" who always had the respect of others.

"When my 4-year-old son Travis tells me



CHRISTINA McCANN/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

**A soldier pays his respects to Atkins at a memorial ceremony in 2007. Atkins, who saved the lives of three soldiers in Iraq by diving onto a suicide bomber, will be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.**

his favorite superhero is Captain America and asks me who my favorite superhero is, my reply always has and will be Staff Sgt. Travis W. Atkins," Hall said.

Atkins' Army awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with four Bronze Service Stars, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Non-commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon,

the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Valorous Unit Award with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Air Assault Badge.

Atkins was buried June 12, 2007, in his hometown of Bozeman in south-central Montana, according to the Army. He is survived by his son, Trevor Oliver, of Coon Rapids, Minn., and his parents, John and Elaine Atkins of Bozeman, Mont., the White House said.

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**Taste of Japan**

# MILITARY

## Japan to build up to a dozen new patrol ships

By HANA KUSUMOTO  
AND SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Japan plans to build as many as a dozen new patrol vessels for its Maritime Self-Defense Force starting in 2022, a Defense Ministry spokesman said Wednesday.

The warships will likely have about 1,000 tons of standard displacement with about 30 crew members. Exactly how many will be built has yet to be determined, but guidelines approved by Japan's Cabinet in November state that the aim is to introduce 12 patrol vessels, the ministry spokesman said.

Construction of the first ship will begin in the fiscal year 2022 with the ship to be commissioned two years later, he said.

The announcement comes amid a dispute between Japan and China over territory and mineral rights in the East China Sea.

The new ships could carry out reconnaissance and surveillance missions, freeing up destroyers for other work, the spokesman said.

The South China Morning Post reported Tuesday that Japanese destroyers had patrolled waters off the Japanese-held Senkaku Islands, referred to as Diaoyu by the Chinese and also claimed by

**The new ships could carry out reconnaissance and surveillance missions, freeing up destroyers for other work.**

Taiwan.

The Defense Ministry spokesman said officials are still discussing where they might deploy the new ships.

"We have made a decision to introduce patrol vessels to accurately address intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions that are increasing in recent years," the spokesman said.

Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at the Tokyo campus of Temple University, said Japan wants to send a message to China that it can't be bullied into giving up territory.

"One can also imagine down the road that Japan might be interested in providing small ships to countries in Southeast Asia," he said, noting China's clashes over territorial waters with nations such as the Philippines.

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## Pentagon seeks base site to house up to 5K migrant children

By LOLITA C. BALDOR  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is reviewing a number of military bases to find a location that can house up to 5,000 unaccompanied migrant children as the U.S. braces for a surge of people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border this spring.

The Department of Health and Human Services submitted the request for space late last week as Homeland Security leaders warned that tens of thousands of families are crossing the border each month. That flow, said Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, will grow worse this spring as the weather gets better.

Meanwhile, HHS Secretary Alex Azar told lawmakers at a House budget hearing Tuesday that he had no advance knowledge of the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy, which resulted in hundreds of migrant children being separated from their parents and placed in his department's custody last spring.

The Pentagon last summer approved the use of Goodfellow Air Force Base near San Angelo, Texas, for an HHS request to accommodate up to 20,000 children. Legal and environmental requirements were finalized, but HHS never came back with a formal request to actually use the base. Officials said that the extra space wasn't needed, and there also were concerns that HHS didn't have the money to construct needed housing and other support facilities at the base.

Army Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Tuesday that since this HHS request is smaller

than last year's, the department is doing another review. It's unclear if the Pentagon will once again propose Goodfellow as the location or if there is another military base that may already have facilities that could accommodate the smaller-sized group.

HHS is now asking for \$1.3 billion in the 2020 fiscal year budget and the creation of a contingency fund of up to \$2 billion.

"We have requested quite a lot, but at the rate we are going with the kids coming across the border, it is quite a burden financially," Azar told the House Energy & Commerce Committee.

Under questioning from Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., Azar told lawmakers that he was not consulted about last year's "zero tolerance" policy that resulted in immigration authorities separating several thousand migrant children from their parents. Once the families were separated, the children were considered "unaccompanied."

HHS has traditionally been responsible for providing temporary shelter to unaccompanied migrant children crossing the border.

"I was not aware that that policy was under consideration when the attorney general announced it," Azar said. Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions made the announcement in early April of last year.

Azar said he hopes he would have raised "significant child welfare issues" had he been consulted.

Congressional investigators have previously found that other government departments and agencies were surprised by the "zero tolerance" decision, but Azar has not generally discussed his own role in public. He said it took a while to "connect the dots" and realize the impact on his department.

## St. Patrick's Day @ Yokosuka MWR Clubs



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For details call 246-8077.

Events are subject to change without notice.

## MILITARY

## Pentagon hazy on pot investment guidelines

By BRIAN FERGUSON  
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force Ethics Office has instructed legal offices to "stand by" for guidance on the legality of marijuana investments from the Pentagon's Standards of Conduct Office, according to an email posted on a popular social media site Tuesday.

"Please continue to stand by — I know there are lots of emails floating around on this issue," Shannon A. McGuire, the Air Force's associate general counsel for fiscal, ethics and administrative law, wrote in the email shared on the "Air Force amn/nci/snci" page. The email's authenticity was not immediately confirmed, though it did include accurate agency contact information.

The email comes amid confusion over how ownership of pot-related businesses might affect determinations of suitability for federal employment and security clearance adjudication for the Pentagon's civilian and military workforce, given pot's unique legal status — still classified as illegal under federal law but allowed for recreational or medical use in many states.

The uncertainty surrounding the issue has arisen from recent guidance circulated within the Defense Department and in conflicting news reports.

While federal law and DOD policy remain opposed to possession, use, manufacture, sale or distribution of pot, rapid changes to the quasi-legal weed industry have raised questions among those looking to invest early into the "Amazon of pot."

Adding to the confusion is that some investors — including servicemembers participating in the Thrift Savings Plan — may hold shares of companies invested in pot-related businesses without knowing it. The federal government also may be indirectly invested in the industry through the company it hired to manage the TSP and retirement investment fund.

Marijuana's status as an investment garnered wider attention last month, when the "Air Force amn/nci/snci" page posted a screen-



HALL ANDERSON, KETCHIKAN (ALASKA) DAILY NEWS/AP

**Kolbe Rose, the manager of Stoney Moose cannabis store, stands behind display cases March 6 in Ketchikan, Alaska. The Pentagon's ban on marijuana investments is in flux.**

shot of an earlier Air Force email citing the DOD's Consolidated Adjudication Facility, which reviews security clearance investigations. It stated that investment in marijuana businesses could be interpreted as prohibited "involvement" with the illegal drug, including if a person's brokerage purchased stock in a pot-related company.

But the DOD interpretation cited in that email is not an official policy, a Pentagon spokeswoman told Stars and Stripes, after news outlets began reporting on the Facebook post. "The DoD follows federal law and national policy concerning controlled substances, which includes marijuana. No official DoD guidance specific to financial involvement in marijuana exists," Army Lt. Col. Audricia Harris, the spokeswoman, said in a written statement this week.

Marijuana is still listed on Schedule I of the federal Controlled Substances Act, meaning it's illegal to knowingly or intentionally possess it, despite 10 states having legalized its recreational use and 33 legalizing it for medical purposes.

An executive order bars federal employees from using illegal drugs and "involvement with marijuana" may be considered when agencies hire, Katharine

Archuleta, then-director of the Office of Personnel Management, said in a 2015 memo.

"Drug involvement can raise questions about an individual's reliability, judgment, and trustworthiness or ability or willingness to comply with laws, rules, and regulations," Archuleta wrote. "An individual's disregard of Federal law pertaining to marijuana remains adjudicatively relevant to suitability determinations and relevant for disciplinary actions."

But military legal offices seem unsure what that means for investors who serve in the military or belong to the Pentagon's civilian workforce.

The legal office at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, declined to comment on whether investing in marijuana businesses violated the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which bars the use, possession, manufacture, distribution and import or export of pot into the U.S.

The Area Defense Counsel at the base said more research would be required on the matter.

But last week, a security manager with the Defense Media Activity sent an email to agency personnel, citing the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and urging that personnel "should err on the

side of caution" before investing in a pot dispensary or "any other entity dealing with marijuana," though it said there was no definitive guidance on the matter.

"Our interpretation and reasoning is that investing in a dispensary as a part of a mutual fund that is unknown to the individual is mitigable. Individuals should not intentionally invest in a marijuana dispensary," the email said. Adjudicators should consider the circumstances surrounding a person's conduct, including whether they knowingly participated, and conduct must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, the email said.

What exactly constitutes investment in an "entity dealing with marijuana" or buying stock in a pot-related company has not been clearly defined.

The industry's growth means servicemembers and civilians with TSP accounts, individual retirement accounts or mutual funds may already be invested in marijuana.

Along with advising legal offices to stand by, the email attributed to McGuire included a list of "companies relating to marijuana investments," which included Constellation Brands, the distributor of Corona beer. Constellation bought a stake in Canopy Growth Corp., a publicly traded cannabis

and hemp company, and is reportedly developing cannabis-infused drinks.

Also listed is Scotts Miracle-Gro, a producer of fertilizer and other lawn and garden products. The document links it to pot through its hydroponics equipment. Hydroponics, a process of growing plants without soil, is a popular technique for growing marijuana.

The list includes several stocks sold on Wall Street. Businesses like Molson Coors Brewing, Marlboro cigarette maker Altria, designer shoe retailer DSW and Budweiser maker Anheuser-Busch InBev are putting their money into pot — mainly companies like Canopy Growth, Cronos Group and Tilray, which started in Canada, where medical pot has long been legal.

The federal government itself may be backing the pot industry. BlackRock Inc., the parent company of the firm that manages four TSP index funds, reported this month that it owned more than 1.3 million shares, or 14 percent, of Innovative Industrial Properties, a company that provides real estate capital for the medical cannabis industry.

It's unclear whether the TSP index funds themselves include investments in publicly traded pot companies. A spokeswoman for the federal retirement program could not immediately say whether such stocks were omitted from the funds.

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## US, UK, Japanese navies to practice sub hunting

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ  
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy, British Royal Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force are scheduled to start anti-submarine warfare drills Thursday for only the second tri-lateral exercise of its kind in the western Pacific.

Patrol Squadron 16 will send a P-8A maritime patrol aircraft to operate alongside the Royal Navy frigate HMS Montrose and the JMSDF destroyer JS Murasame, a P-1 aircraft and a submarine, a Navy statement Tuesday said.

"The Royal Navy, Japan Mari-

time Self-Defense Force, and United States Navy all support a free and open Indo-Pacific," Capt. Brian Erickson, commander, Task Force 72, said in the statement. "Exercises like this demonstrate our nation's resolve in the region, while improving interoperability, maintaining readiness and learning best practices from one another."

The three maritime forces have trained together in multilateral exercises such as Rim of the Pacific, but this is only the second time for this kind of exercise in the region.

The allies first came together in December for a two-day subma-

rine-hunting exercise by the Royal Navy's oldest serving frigate, the HMS Argyll, and the JMSDF helicopter destroyer JS Izumo in the Philippines, according to the statement. A Navy submarine also took part, the Navy said at the time.

"The improvement of our tactical skill set is expected throughout" the exercise, Cmdr. Shusaku Okada, commanding officer of the JS Murasame, said in the statement.

"I also hope that further cooperation be strengthened with the Royal Navy, the United States Navy, and the mutual understanding be deepened."

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## WAR ON TERRORISM

# Taliban-US talks: Progress, but no breakthrough

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States and the Taliban have drafted an agreement in principle on two of four core issues at the center of peace talks intended to end the U.S.' longest war, but officials and experts say much work remains.

Touted by both sides as "the most substantive" talks to date and "extensive" and "detailed," the 13-day round of discussions in Qatar addressed four main concerns: the potential withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops from the country; assurances the Taliban would not support terrorism; dialogue between the Taliban and the Kabul government; and an end to the fighting. The parties put terms on the first two of those issues in writing.

"When that agreement, in draft, is finalized, the Taliban and an inclusive Afghan negotiating team that includes the Afghan government and other Afghanies will begin intra-Afghan negotiations of a political settlement and comprehensive cease-fire," Robert Paldino, deputy State Department spokesman, told reporters in Washington on Tuesday.

Officials have declined to discuss details, and experts said that despite the advancements a breakthrough has not yet been

achieved.

"Every time you move from mouth to paper, I do think that's progress," said Vanda Felbab-Brown, senior fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institution. "The question is: Is the paper worth any more than the ink that's written on it? That's a separate question."

A Taliban official at the talks, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said the sides remain far apart on the timeline for a withdrawal of U.S. forces. The Taliban wants them to pull out in three to five months, but the U.S. is saying it would take 18 months to two years, he said.

Military experts in logistics and counterterrorism were among the negotiating team, partly to show the Taliban that an orderly withdrawal after nearly 18 years in the country would take time, The New York Times reported, citing an unnamed American official.

The U.S., meanwhile, has sought a promise from the Taliban that it will not allow Afghanistan to host international terrorists, such as al-Qaida, which launched the Sept. 11 attacks. Osama bin Laden's successor in al-Qaida, Ayman al-Zawahiri, is believed to be hiding in Afghanistan.

The Taliban were reluctant to identify specific militant groups, the AP reported. Senior American



Stars and Stripes

**U.S. soldiers move toward a village near Forward Operating Base Zangabad in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, in 2013. An agreement drafted by the U.S. and the Taliban agrees in principle on two of the core issues in talks intended to end America's involvement in the war.**

officials told the Times, however, that the Taliban had worked out on a detailed proposal for an agreement on preventing terrorism in Afghanistan which specifically mentioned al-Qaida. The officials told the newspaper that they were satisfied with the proposed enforcement mechanisms.

Experts say Taliban leadership must walk a fine line regarding the extremist group founded by bin Laden for fear of angering the fighters in their ranks. However, the Taliban have increased in strength in recent years and have less of a need to ally with the terrorist group, which has significantly weakened, said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia program at the Wilson Center in Washington.

The latest round of talks also included the involvement of Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, another promising sign.

The two sides are expected to meet again later this month in the hopes of finalizing a deal ahead of the spring fighting season, the Times reported.

U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said on Twitter that he would head to Washington, where he's expected to brief Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and would meet with other parties, likely including the Afghan government, which did not take part in the talks in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

"Since Khalilzad says the draft agreements still need to be finalized, that means that the Taliban leadership is still undecided on whether to sign on to whatever they agreed to," David Sedney, a career diplomat who served at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul after 9/11, said in a phone interview.

The U.S. has stated all issues are interconnected and Khalilzad

has said "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed."

But the Taliban have leverage on the battlefield and the ability to walk away from talks, Kugelman said.

The militant group has long refused to speak with the Afghan government, whom it regards as puppets. Instead, it has chosen to speak with Afghan elites and warlords not in the Kabul government, as it did in publicized talks last month in Moscow.

"I'm not optimistic the Taliban will talk to the Afghan government, at least right away," said Wahid Muzdha, a former Taliban and a researcher who attended the Moscow talks. "But if they do not, it will be chaos."

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.  
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## Firefight: Both sides may have thought they were battling Taliban

### FROM FRONT PAGE

The patrol came under small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire, Resolute Support said in a statement. Despite efforts to bring the situation under control, they continued to take fire before calling in air support. The U.S. conducted the "precision self-defense" airstrikes on the people firing on the Afghan and American troops.

"We are operating in a complex environment where enemy fighters do not wear uniforms and use stolen military vehicles to attack government forces," the statement said.

Both sides thought they were battling Taliban attackers, according to some media reports. Since the withdrawal of most international forces in late 2014, the Taliban have gained strength. Its fighters have overrun several checkpoints, killing security forces and stealing weapons, gear and vehicles.

Earlier in the week, the Taliban reportedly attacked an Afghan

position in Badghis province, killing or capturing more than 50 soldiers at the outpost in Bala Murghab.

In Uruzgan, it was unclear whether the airstrikes or the fire fight caused the casualties.

News of the incident came as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani took to Twitter to promise action on recent reports of civilian casualties caused by government forces in the country. Ghani has called for investigations into the incident and demanded that Afghan National Defense and Security Forces officials seek to

reduce unintended deaths.

"I've ordered ANDSF to either abort or to wait until our potential target is even a single civilian is present," Ghani wrote. "Our security and defense forces are committed to the rules of war and engagement and they only provide proportionate response to any enemy attacks."

Long a region considered the heartland of the insurgency, Uruzgan was among the three

provinces with the most districts under insurgent control or influence, according to a Resolute Support assessment in October. While all of Afghanistan's provincial capitals are under government control, Tirin Kot is in the only district in Uruzgan that was not considered controlled, influenced or contested by Taliban forces, a January report showed.

The checkpoint outside the capital housed about two dozen troops and rests on a hill known to be on the front lines of Taliban

territory, said Haji Dadgul Khan, a tribal leader in the town. He saw three of the wounded soldiers from the attack while visiting the town's hospital, he said.

"Everyone here is sad about this incident. It feels like they killed our own sons," Khan said. "How can they not see an enemy and a friendly force? They have night visions and all the equipment."

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## 2020 PENTAGON BUDGET

# Key lawmaker predicts defense budget deal

By CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A key House Armed Services Committee member said Tuesday that Congress could reach a deal on the proposed defense budget despite some predictions the spending plan won't get required lawmaker approval.

Texas Rep. Mac Thornberry, the ranking Republican on the House committee, said he's telling colleagues to ignore the controversial White House move to ask for a massive war fund and instead focus on the much-needed topline figure for the military.

## Navy makes largest 2020 service request

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The latest budget request for the Navy, released Tuesday, calls for \$194.5 billion for more personnel and ships to meet the challenges of increased activity and competition in the maritime domain.

The Department of the Navy's total proposed budget, which includes funding for the Marine Corps, is \$205.6 billion — making it the largest service request for fiscal year 2020.

"Our budget is strategy driven, and it's focused on maximizing our naval power," said Rear Adm. Randy Crites, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for budget, during the Navy's presentation at the Pentagon. "It resources the force required to implement the National Defense Strategy and aligns our people, capability and processes."

The largest request in the overall Navy budget is for operation and maintenance, at \$68.5 billion, an increase of \$5.6 billion. Of that, \$57.8 billion would be used specifically for the Navy, including ship operations (\$19.1 billion) and air operations (\$11.7 billion).

## Requested increase would boost Marines' end strength

By CLAUDIA GRISALES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The annual Marine Corps budget would rise by about 6 percent, and end strength would also grow under a proposal released Tuesday.

The Marines would seek its budget to go to \$45.9 billion in fiscal year 2020 if Congress approves the plan.

The service would add 100 spots for a total of 186,200 personnel. 21,512 will be officers, and 164,688 will be enlisted.

"This increase supports the Marine Corps Operation Concept that focuses on the changes necessary to operate successfully in an increasingly complex global

environment," the budget request reads. "This growth supports building a more experienced, better trained and more capable force by increasing the number of Marines with special skills, like those required for special operations, intelligence operations, electronic, information and cyber warfare."

The Marine Corps request was part of President Donald Trump's budget proposal for fiscal year 2020, which begins Oct. 1. It's part of an overall Navy request for \$205.6 billion, which is up about 5 percent from fiscal year 2019, which ends Sept. 30.

Overall, the Trump administration is requesting \$750 billion for the 2020 defense budget, which

covers the Pentagon and other defense-related programs.

However, a significant portion of that request, \$174 billion, has been placed in the war fund known as the Overseas Contingency Operations account, or OCO, to avoid budget caps requiring defense spending to fall under \$576 billion.

Leaders in the Democratic-controlled House have said shifting large amounts of spending into OCO is not acceptable. Republicans have cheered the overall defense number, however.

That leaves an uphill battle for Democratic and Republican lawmakers to agree on the budget.

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President Donald Trump's administration is requesting \$750 billion for national security, which includes a \$174 billion request for a war account that's been referred to by top military experts as a "slush fund."

"I would say this is not the Pentagon's idea," Thornberry said Tuesday during a roundtable discussion with reporters on Capitol Hill. "Using this method, just everybody dismisses it and makes the administration or at least [the White House's Office of Management and Budget] less relevant."

Thornberry's comments come on the same day that the Pentagon issued its service budgets. Overall, Trump's budget

proposal for fiscal year 2020, which begins Oct. 1, would boost the current spending by about 3 percent, which is necessary, Thornberry said.

However, the requested \$174 billion for the war fund known as the Overseas Contingency Operations account, or OCO, is an effort to avoid budget caps requiring defense spending to be less than \$576 billion in the next fiscal year.

It's a move that leaders in the Democrat-controlled House have already said is a nonstarter.

"Congress will never agree to this giant OCO increase on its own," Thornberry said. "I have to confess the reason for doing

it that way is not clear."

Still, some Republicans such as Thornberry have cheered the overall defense budget amount. For his part, Thornberry is telling colleagues to ignore the construction of the request as far as what's in OCO and what's not.

He said lawmakers need to reach a two-year deal to lift defense spending limits, as dictated by the Budget Control Act, which is in effect for two more fiscal years.

"The topline is a good number," Thornberry said. "Let's get a negotiation going right now to last through the last two years of the Budget Control Act ... and get it done so we can all move forward."



RYAN ARCIAMA/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The USS Kearsarge, left, receives fuel and stores from the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd during a replenishment-at-sea on Monday. The Navy's budget proposal of more than \$205 billion is the largest among the military services.

haul in fiscal 2024. Crites said the Navy still has time to reassess its decision on the ship's retirement, considering analysis from an ongoing force structure assessment, for example.

Twelve battle force ships

would be purchased with the Navy's \$23.8 billion shipbuilding procurement request: a Ford class aircraft carrier, a FFG(X) guided-missile frigate, two John Lewis class oilers, three Virginia class submarines, three Arleigh

Burke class destroyers and two T-ATF towing, salvage and rescue ships. Additionally, two large unmanned surface vessels would be funded.

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ISRAEL CHINCIO/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Benjamin Westmoreland sights in behind a .50-caliber Special Applications Scoped Rifle aboard the USS John P. Murtha last month in the eastern Pacific Ocean. A 6 percent increase in the Marine Corps budget has been proposed.

# 2020 PENTAGON BUDGET

## Army seeks new weapons, lowers active force needs

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Army wants \$191 billion for its fiscal year 2020 budget, which calls for big investments in new weapons systems to counter adversaries such as Russia and China while also slightly reducing the number of soldiers sought for the active force.

The Army's request, released by the Pentagon on Tuesday, roughly equals what the service asked for one year ago. But this year's plan puts greater emphasis on upgrading its arsenal for future conflicts with more funding to develop a next generation combat vehicle, helicopters and ground-based missile systems.

The Army's proposed budget would have matched 2019's request except for a new \$9.2 billion addition in emergency funds, a portion of which could be tapped in connection with President Donald Trump's efforts to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

However, the Army was forced to reduce its end strength goals after a year of weak recruiting. Last year, the Army requested an end strength of 487,000 active-duty troops with a plan to add 4,000 each year until 2021. Now, the Army is seeking an end strength of 480,000 active soldiers, according to budget documents. Total 2020 Army end strength, which includes National Guard and Reserve forces, is to be 1,005,500 troops.

"We do need to grow," Under Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy told reporters. But a strong job market in the United States has complicated the efforts and resulted in a more modest growth plan, he said.

Meanwhile, boosting the readiness of the force remains a top priority, with the Army on track to reach its goal of having all brigades combat ready by 2022, military officials said.

"We will need to continue this level of funding to achieve those readiness goals," Lt. Gen. Thomas Horlander, an Army deputy for budget issues, told reporters.

In the 2020 proposal, the Army also calls for major war games overseas, including the inaugural division level "Europe Defender 20" and Pacific Pathways.

The Army base budget adds up

to \$150.7 billion while calling for another \$31.6 billion to support overseas contingency operations such as the war in Afghanistan and the deterrent mission to counter Russia in Europe.

The budget calls for a \$1 billion increase in research and development, bringing that account to \$12.2 billion to help the service modernize in six key areas. The top priority is developing long-range precision fires. After that, the Army said it needs a next-generation combat vehicle to replace the Bradley Fighting Vehicle as well as new airfield capabilities, air and missile defense weaponry, gear to enhance soldier lethality, and an improved communication network.

Research and development highlights include \$378 million for a next-generation combat vehicle, \$427 million for a future attack/reconnaissance helicopter and \$428 million for "Lowest Tier Air Missile Defense" to give ground forces a wider range of options.

The research budget also calls for upgrades to ground combat vehicles such as the Stryker, Abrams and Paladin.

The Army described itself as a "strategic inflection point" requiring a shift from irregular warfare to large-scale ground combat operations," the budget request states. The Army's aim is to begin fielding the new weapons systems by 2028.

With the Army focused on developing new systems, procurement would decline slightly in 2020, going from \$26.8 billion in 2019 to \$25.2 billion for fiscal year 2020, which starts Oct. 1.

While the Army is investing on developing new systems, the service plans to start phasing out older legacy programs. In preparation for the 2020 budget, Army leaders said they found \$31 billion that can be saved by eliminating various programs in the years ahead that don't fit into its future force plan. That required "tough choices," McCarthy said.

The savings will be realized over time rather than all at once. However, on the procurement side, there is reduced demand for the Bradley combat vehicle, which is expected to be gradually phased out if efforts to develop a next-generation vehicle prove successful.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

**Strykers of 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment travel through Lithuania in 2015. The Pentagon plans to slash nearly 10 percent of its budget for the European Deterrent Initiative, its program for deterring Russian aggression in Europe.**

## US looks to trim budget for deterring Russia in Europe

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — The Pentagon plans to slash by nearly 10 percent its budget for deterring Russian aggression in Europe, where the U.S. wants allies to pick up the funding slack.

The Defense Department's 2020 budget calls for \$5.9 billion to fund the European Deterrent Initiative, down from \$6.5 billion a year earlier. The funds support the rotation of U.S.-based troops into Europe to beef up NATO's eastern flank, the prepositioning of weapons stockpiles and improvements in infrastructure, such as airfields in the east.

The troop rotations will continue but the cutbacks mean fewer military infrastructure initiatives because much of the work is already done, the Pentagon's deputy comptroller, Elainie McCusker, said during a Pentagon budget briefing Tuesday.

McCusker also said the U.S. wants allies to do more when it comes to deterring efforts.

"We're also looking at increased burden-sharing," she said. "We're always looking for new ways to partner ... with our partners out there."

For the Trump administration, getting allies in Europe to shoulder more of the security burden has been a top priority even as the U.S. has increased the number of its own troops on the Continent during the past two years.

However, the EDI reduction would be the first cut to the fund since it was established in 2014 as a response to Russia's military intervention in Ukraine.

Originally called the European Reassurance Initiative, the program was designed to show solidarity with allies like those in the Baltics and Poland

who were concerned about a more aggressive Russia. The original price tag was \$1 billion, and it has steadily climbed in the years since, with a heavier focus on bolstering capabilities aimed at deterring potential Russian military adventurism on NATO territory.

U.S. European Command, in a statement following the Pentagon's budget release, signaled no dissatisfaction with the level of funding for 2020.

The EDI funds "will allow our leaders to more adequately meet emerging threats to the security and territorial integrity of our NATO allies," EUCOM said.

Last week, EUCOM chief Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti told lawmakers that allies in Europe are prepared to do more when it comes to improving the infrastructure militaries rely on, like rail lines and airfields. The European Union plans to spend \$7 billion on logistics and infrastructure over the next five years, Scaparrotti said.

"We've got to follow up and make sure that that investment goes to the right places and actually makes a difference in — in military mobility," Scaparrotti said.

Pentagon officials said the plan to scale back EDI shouldn't be taken as a sign that it sees less of a threat posed by Russia.

"No, absolutely not ... we are continuing to be committed to our NATO partnership. And as you see from the strategy, you know, we're very much preparing for great-power competition," McCusker said.

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## 2020 PENTAGON BUDGET

# USAF seeks boost to increase force, for future weapons

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Air Force has asked Congress for a \$10.5 billion budget boost in fiscal year 2020 to add thousands of new airmen, buy dozens of new aircraft and increase funding for future weapons systems that the service contends will be necessary for a major war.

The Air Force requested \$204.8 billion for the next fiscal year as it looks toward building a larger, more modern force that top officials have said it needs to retain military advantages over near-peer competitors such as Russia or China.

The request was part of the Pentagon's \$718.3 billion proposed budget, the details of which were released Tuesday.

"To counter the threats projected in the 2020 to 2030 time line ... we must increase our capacity to evolve, incorporate advanced technology, and cutting-edge capabilities in new and innovative ways," said Air Force Maj. Gen. John Pletcher, the service's deputy assistant secretary for budget. The budget request "sets the conditions to field faster and smarter the technology we need that will allow us to achieve a strategic advantage over near-peer competitors," he said.

The request would fund the addition of 4,400 new airmen, bringing the Air Force to 510,600 servicemembers — 332,800 on active duty, 107,700 in the Air National Guard and 70,100 in the Air Force Reserve. It would mark the fifth consecutive year of growth in force strength for the

Pentagon officials said their fiscal year 2020 budget proposal is driven by the 2017 National De-

service and return it to pre-2012 personnel levels, the year that the service was cut drastically by mandated budget cuts.

The 2020 budget request includes some \$30 million in incentive pay to attract individuals to pursue Air Force careers in positions for which the service has been fighting shortfalls in recent years. Among those long-standing shortfalls, the service seeks to add 1,480 pilots in 2020.

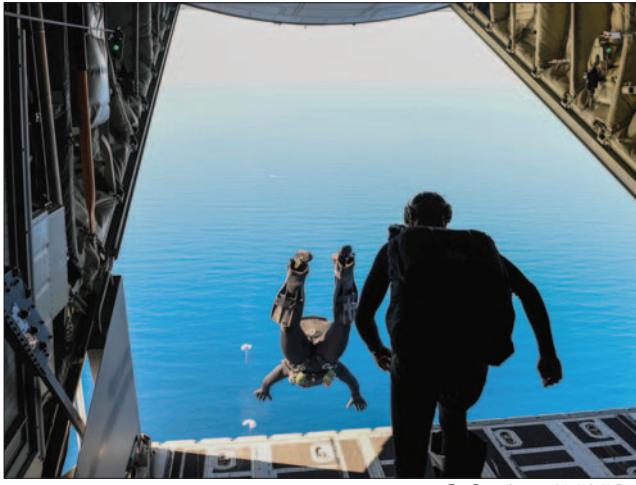
Top service officials said last year that the Air Force would like to increase to more than 740,000 servicemembers in the coming years as it eyes adding 74 combat-focused squadrons to reach 386 combat squadrons by 2025 or 2030.

The 2020 request does not directly build any new squadrons, Pletcher said. But he argued it positions the Air Force to begin building new units in the coming years.

"It is a discussion we'll continue having," the general said of the proposed squadron increase. "It is clearly a priority."

Air Force officials also want to purchase 101 aircraft in 2020, according to the budget documents. The aircraft include 48 F-35A Lightning II fighter jets, eight F-15EX Advanced Eagle fighter jets, 12 KC-46A Pegasus fuel tankers, 12 HH-60W combat rescue helicopters, 12 MQ-9 Reaper drones, eight MC-130J Commando II special operations tankers/transport aircraft and one EC-37B Compass Call electronic warfare aircraft.

Pentagon officials said their fiscal year 2020 budget proposal is driven by the 2017 National De-



ERIN PIAZZA/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

**SEAL Team Seven** members jump from an Air Force MC-130J Commando II during the Emerald Warrior/Trident joint special operations exercise at Naval Air Station North Island, Calif., on Jan. 19. The Air Force has asked for a budget increase to add new airmen and new aircraft.

fense Strategy, and it prioritizes the potential for a future war with a near-peer competitor over the conflicts American troops have been fighting in the Middle East and Afghanistan for nearly two decades.

For the Air Force, that means a focus on next-generation weaponry.

The budget invests \$1.5 billion to test and prototype future technology, including hypersonic missiles that travel more than five times the speed of sound, directed-energy technology such as laser weapons, and advanced jet engines designed to save in fuel costs.

The 2020 budget request also increases the amount of money that the Air Force wants to invest in its future stealth bomber, the B-21 Raider.

The Air Force proposes pour-

ing about \$3 billion into the program being developed by Northrop Grumman and slated for production by the mid-2020s. That represents an about \$725 million increase in yearly funding over the amount enacted last year by Congress.

While much of the B-21 Raider program to build the new bomber capable of delivering nuclear and conventional weapons remains classified, Carolyn Gleason, the Air Force deputy for budget, said Tuesday that the program was moving into the manufacturing and design phase and is "pretty much on schedule" to be completed on time.

Meanwhile, the request also seeks \$1.8 billion for ongoing combat operations in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. Much of that money would go toward replenishing stocks of

bombs dropped in combat in those locations.

The fiscal year 2020 budget also seeks \$72 million that would stand up the headquarters for President Donald Trump's proposed Space Force, a sixth military service focused on space operation that would fit within the Air Force Department.

The Air Force is seeking an additional \$2.4 billion for its own space operations that would fund four space launches for national security purposes in 2020, the Air Force's first advanced GPS II satellite and other space programs designed to "further accelerate our efforts to protect and defend our ability to operate in space," according to the budget documents.

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## Smaller Missile Defense Agency budget proposed for 2020

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Despite President Donald Trump's call to invest heavily in new missile defense technologies, the Defense Department is requesting a decrease in funding for the Missile Defense Agency to \$9.4 billion as part of the Pentagon's proposed budget of \$718.3 billion for fiscal year 2020.

That's down more than \$1 billion from last year's \$10.5 billion budget, according to Pentagon documents released Tuesday.

The decrease is to offset a surge in funding for the agency in fiscal years 2018 and 2019. Elaine McCusker, the Pentagon's deputy comptroller, said during a news conference about the Defense Department's proposed budget.

She also said some of the Pentagon's missile-related spending is seen in other areas of the budget that fall outside the defensive purview of the Missile Defense Agency, which develops, tests and fields missile

defense systems to help protect the United States, its forces and allies.

The Pentagon's budget requests \$13.6 billion for the Missile Defense Review, which was ordered by Trump. Released in January, the review sets guidelines for departmentwide efforts to strengthen missile defense. It presents the policies, strategies and capabilities designed to guide future initiatives and programs for the next decade while also meeting international obligations and commitments to U.S. allies and partners.

Since its release, the review has shifted missile defense policy and called for the Pentagon to study a variety of potential technologies that could be used in the future to aid the detection and the destruction of incoming munitions, including space-based defensive weapons using projectiles or lasers.

"What we also see is we've invested \$1.3 billion in specifically [Missile Defense Review]-related technologies that are not

inside the missile defense agency budget but that are part of our missile defense and defense program."

Rear Adm. Jon A. Hill, deputy director of the Missile Defense Agency, reiterated during a briefing on the budget that funding for missile defense is spread through the defense budget in its partnerships with the military services.

The largest system request in the budget is \$1.8 billion for ground-based midcourse defense, which provides combatant commanders the capability to engage and destroy intermediate- and long-range ballistic missile threats in space. That amount will maintain the deployment of 44 interceptors at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., and continue work on a new missile field and 20 silos at Fort Greely. It also continues work on 20 more interceptors for a total of 64 by 2025.

This funding also allows for the ongoing development of the redesigned kill vehicle, which had been delayed by two years be-

cause of a failed design review. A new design review is now projected for 2020. The kill vehicle destroys incoming missiles in space.

"We determined the best thing to do is go back and assess that design and take the time to do it right," Hill said.

During Trump's visit to the Pentagon last month, he said the United States will invest heavily in studying new technologies capable of defending the U.S. mainland against missile threats, including advanced hypersonic missiles under development by other countries.

The MDA budget includes \$157 million for hypersonic defense technology. That money will allow for software modifications and defines requirements and architecture for future demonstrations.

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## MILITARY

## Plans for Poland base proceed

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Discussions about a permanent U.S. military base in Poland are moving forward, with a top Pentagon official arriving in Warsaw this week to hammer out details on expanding the American military presence in the country, officials said.

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy John Roos is meeting with his Polish counterparts to work on the plan, a top Pentagon official told lawmakers Wednesday. While it could take about six months to finalize, progress was being made, said Kathryn Wheelbarger, acting assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

"We are working out some of the technicalities," Wheelbarger said during testimony before the House Armed Services Committee.

Last year, Poland offered to spend up to \$2 billion toward a permanent U.S. base, U.S. European Command chief Gen. Curtis

M. Scaparrotti said Wednesday that he wants a mix of permanent troops and rotational forces in Poland, making perhaps his clearest public comments yet in support of the idea.

"I think it is a mix (of rotational and permanent troops). I am perfectly content with large forces we are rotating today," Scaparrotti said.

However, Scaparrotti said there is a role for a permanent headquarters element, which would manage the flow of rotational troops and be effective at establishing relationships with allies in the region.

Should the plan become reality, it appears likely that the basing arrangement will be something less than the "Fort Trump" concept Poland was initially lobbying for.

Earlier this month, Polish media reported that among the measures the U.S. was considering was an Army headquarters in Poznan, a special operations site near Krakow and making permanent an

Air Force detachment in Lask.

Talk of a larger military mission in Poland comes less than a week after revelations about President Donald Trump's interest in demanding countries that have U.S. forces pay the full cost of hosting them, plus a 50 percent premium for the privilege of protection.

Wheelbarger said she was unaware if the "Cost plus 50%" it is known was getting a serious look in Europe.

"My understanding is that rhetoric came from conversations from the Pacific," she said. "It's not a conversation we've had in my portfolio at all."

Trump's apparent interest in charging allies for troops, reported last week by Bloomberg, was blasted by lawmakers on Wednesday.

Rep. Adam Smith, the Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said the idea was a "monumentally stupid approach." U.S. forces overseas are there for the mutual benefit of



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

**Commander of the U.S. European Command Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti and acting Assistant Secretary of Defense Kathryn Wheelbarger prepare to testify on Capitol Hill in Washington on Wednesday.**

the U.S. and allies, he said.

At a separate House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing Wednesday, which focused on the value of NATO, lawmakers also raised concern about "Cost plus 50."

Rep. Eliot Engel, the committee's Democratic chairman, called

the concept "outlandish."

"This whole scheme reveals how little (Trump) understands about how our alliances advance our own strategic interest," Engel said.

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## DOD employees could owe IRS thousands after PCS moves

By AARON KNOWLES  
*Stars and Stripes*

WIESBADEN, Germany — Defense Department civilians who made a permanent change of station move within the past two years will soon receive debt notices, which also will include unanticipated interest charges and potential state tax penalties because of a 2017 tax law change, military officials in Europe said.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Services office is now calculating amounts owed by affected employees with a plan to mail debt letters in the fall, Army officials said. Once the letters are received, employees will have 45 days to pay the entire amount owed or work with DFAS to determine a payment plan. U.S. Army Europe officials said at a Monday town hall meeting in Wiesbaden.

Many civilians said they were unsure about how much they owed and expressed frustration with an overall lack of clarity about the tax change, which has created widespread confusion at military finance offices.

"The information isn't being put out there and if it is, people aren't getting it and don't know," said Frances Salas, a DOD civilian with the Red Cross. "It's like, here's a bill, now figure it out. People say that we shouldn't be upset because 'we get paid enough,' but not all positions are paid the same."

Amounts owed in federal taxes can vary from \$1,000 to more \$11,000, according to the Army, and those numbers could go up. Recently, DFAS announced that state taxes were yet to be factored in. The tax amounts at the state level were still to be determined, it added.

The confusion stems from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which made most PCS entitle-

ments taxable and reported as taxable income to the IRS when it was implemented in January 2018. DFAS, however, didn't implement a system change to properly collect tax withholdings as required by the new law for direct reimbursements until 10 months after it took effect.

Allowances received for household goods shipments are now taxable, but long-term storage and privately owned vehicle shipments to and from assignments outside the continental United States are not taxable income, DOD has said. Other moving-expense allowances that are still taxable under the 2017 law include airfare, passport and visa fees, en-route lodging and per-diem expenses.

The General Services Administration didn't put out its first bulletin informing employees of the tax changes until May, clarifying that agencies could reimburse "substantially all" moving-related expenses for civilians who go from one federal job to another through Withholding Tax Allowance and Relocation Income Tax Allowance. However, new hires and those retiring from federal jobs are not eligible.

Employees who took jobs prior to being notified of the tax implications learned that they will still be liable for the debt regardless of when they were informed.

Unclear consequences about what the changes meant was the reason the organization didn't notify its employees earlier, said Suzanne Torres, Civilian Personnel Director for USAREUR.

"We were waiting for that decision to first find out if we would even be covered in order to file RITA," said Torres, referring to one of the tax allowances. "All of the implications were unknown."

In the summer of 2018, the command began putting out an

announcements alerting employees to the tax changes and adding information to vacancy announcements, Torres said.

"That's really the first time that we could announce to the public that there is a major tax change, you need to be aware of it," she said.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense has a proposal that would exclude household goods, the most expensive portion of the move, from being taxed. U.S. Africa Command also has requested exemptions for retirees and new employees. However, there have been no decisions on those

matters.

Those seeking more information on the changes or assistance in filing for RITA can contact DFAS-CIVREL-Questionsonly@mail.mil or by phone at 888-332-7366. More information can be found online at www.dfas.mil/AskDFAS.html.

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## MILITARY/VETERANS

# Complaint filed against Shanahan over Boeing ties

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A government watchdog organization Wednesday filed a complaint charging acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan might have broken ethics rules including using his public position to benefit his former employer, Boeing.

A group called Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, or CREW, asked the Defense Department Inspector General to determine whether Shanahan had violated his own ethics pledge to recuse himself from matters concerning Boeing, the massive aerospace firm where Shanahan worked for 30 years before joining the Pentagon in 2017. CREW is a prominent nonpartisan government watchdog group based in Washington.

The complaint alleges Shanahan has promoted Boeing products to his subordinates and disparaged the company's competitors, including Lockheed Martin, which was chosen over Boeing to build the F-35 Lightning II advanced fighter jet.

Shanahan, 56, was named acting defense secretary by President Donald Trump on Jan. 1 after serving as the Pentagon's No. 2 under former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis since July 2017. He had previously worked at Boeing since 1986, working on military-related programs as well as commercial aviation. He was serving as the company's senior vice president for supply chain and operations when he left to work at the Pentagon.

Shanahan is considered by Pentagon officials to be among the top contenders to be nominated for the permanent defense secretary job. White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said this week that she could not confirm Shanahan would be nominated, but she added Trump "likes him."

In the CREW complaint, the group called Shanahan's alleged behavior "extremely disturbing," writing the acting Pentagon chief has been accused multiple times in news stories of praising Boeing in private meetings and disparaging Lockheed Martin, particularly about the F-35, the Pentagon's most expensive program and one that has been plagued by performance problems and delays.

"Ethics rules make clear that government employees cannot abuse their offices to promote a private company, much less work on official matters involving their former employer," Noah Bookbinder, CREW's executive director, said in a statement.

A spokesman for Shanahan denied any wrongdoing.

"Secretary Shanahan has at all times remained committed to complying [with] his Ethics

Agreement, which screens Boeing matters to another DOD official and ensures no potential for a conflict of interest with Boeing on any matter," said Army Lt. Col. Joe Buccino, Shanahan's spokesman.

The complaint comes one day after the Pentagon unveiled its budget request for fiscal year 2020 to Congress. That budget request includes the purchase of eight Boeing-built F-15EX fighter jets for some \$1.1 billion. It also includes plans to buy an additional 72 of those jets through the next five years.

It marks the first purchase of F-15 aircraft by the Pentagon since 2001, raising concerns among some analysts.

The Bloomberg news organization reported in December that the decision to purchase the F-15 aircraft, fourth-generation fighters, instead of using the money to buy additional F-35s was made "with some prodigality" by Shanahan. That report cited unnamed officials.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson as recently as September told reporters that she preferred not to purchase new fourth-generation fighter aircraft.

However, top Air Force officials on Wednesday defended the purchase to lawmakers during a hearing before the Senate subcommittee on defense appropriations. Air Force Gen. David Goldfein, the service's chief of staff, told lawmakers that the F-15EX was simply "the most affordable option" to quickly replace F-15C models that would soon be deemed not worthy to fly. Another Air Force official said the ultimate decision to purchase F-15Cs was made by Mattis before he resigned.

In its complaint, CREW wrote "Shanahan appears to have participated in the decision to include more than \$1 billion in federal funds in the \$2020 budget cycle for the (F-15EX) fighter aircraft," and they could find no evidence that he had received a waiver allowing him to work on any projects from which Boeing could benefit.

"Government resources should be used for public purposes, not to promote or denigrate any private business," Bookbinder wrote in the complaint, which he signed. "Furthermore, as Mr. Shanahan's ethical commitments make clear, he cannot and should not be involved with any [Defense Department] matters involving his former employer Boeing without an authorization or waiver."

Officials also said the new system would help cut down the backlog of appeals, which included 402,000



BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

## Philippines port call

The USS Blue Ridge, the U.S. 7th Fleet Flagship, is anchored off Manila Bay west of Manila, Philippines, for a routine port call Wednesday. The ship sailed through the South China Sea as Capt. Eric Anduze, the ship commander, renewed an American vow to "sail, fly and operate wherever the law allows us to" despite China's objection to U.S. military presence in the disputed sea.



Shanahan

## Judge: VA appeals system a 'tragedy'

BY NIKKI WENTLING  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The retiring chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims told lawmakers Tuesday that the Department of Veterans Affairs appeals system is "ancient" and "inefficient" and in need of drastic change.

While testifying before a House Appropriations subcommittee, Chief Judge Robert Davis said the pressure on VA employees to get through a large backlog of benefits claims leads to poor decision-making and a high number of appeals.

Davis, a Navy veteran, has held a seat on the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims for nearly 15 years.

The court, often referred to as "Veterans Court," provides veterans an impartial review of decisions made by the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals.

"I think it's a tragedy, the way the system operates currently," Davis said. "I think we've been tied to a structure that is ancient and inefficient. The sooner Congress and all of us in this area look at this system from a 50,000-foot level and say, 'We need to make these kinds of adjustments,' the sooner we'll be able to meet the needs of our veterans in a much better way."

Davis has been critical of the VA system. The topic was brought up Tuesday by Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-Penn., who cited an August article by the Wall Street Journal in which Davis criticized the appeals process as "horribly flawed."

"We can't ignore that when you come here to testify, chief judge," Cartwright said.

Davis elaborated Tuesday on his comments to the Wall Street Journal. He said he remains skeptical of a new law implemented last month that VA officials promised would allow veterans to receive decisions on their benefits claims in days or months, instead of years.

The new law, titled the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, was approved by Congress in 2017 and went into effect Feb. 19. It involves multiple avenues for veterans to appeal their claims, including an option to get a review from a higher level adjudicator or go directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Under the old system, veterans waited three to seven years to reconcile their appeals. The new one could get veterans through the process in as few as 125 days, VA officials vowed.

Officials also said the new system would help cut down the backlog of appeals, which included 402,000

cases as of last month.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that this modernization act may help the system, but in my view, congressman, it is tinkering around the edges when a larger fix is needed," Davis said. "And it's a fix that might be viewed as radical by some."

When pressed for specifics, Davis suggested using mediation to negotiate a settlement between the VA and veterans or providing them general pensions. He said there were "a lot of possibilities" that he believed should be discussed with the VA secretary.

Once he retires from the court, Davis agreed to discuss the issue further with Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, D-Fla., who is chairwoman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies.

Davis appeared before the subcommittee Tuesday to discuss the court's budget request for fiscal year 2020, which totals \$35.4 million. The proposed amount — released Monday as part of President Donald Trump's budget plan — didn't increase from fiscal year 2019, though Davis said the court experienced a surge of work in 2018.

The VA last year touted that the Board of Veterans' Appeals had worked through a record number of cases — about 85,000, up from 52,000 cases the previous year. Davis attributed the surge at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to the board's increased pace.

He warned appropriators Tuesday that the court might soon need congressional approval for an additional two judges, bringing the total to 11. Of the nine judges now on the court, two — including Davis — are scheduled to retire at the end of their 15-year terms in December 2019.

"We're watching our numbers carefully to track the very real possibility that nine judges may not be sufficient to keep pace with this growth trend," Davis said.

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## NATION



STEVEN SENNE/AP

William "Rick" Singer, founder of Edge College & Career Network, departs federal court in Boston on Tuesday after he pleaded guilty to charges in a nationwide college admissions bribery scandal.

## CEO steps down as dozens ensnared in college entry scam

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER  
AND COLLIN BINKLEY

Associated Press

BOSTON — A college admissions scandal moved from bombshell indictments to guilty pleas in a matter of hours, yet the full fallout from the federal case against the rich and famous could take months or more to unfold.

Big names such as actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin headline the list of some 50 people charged in documents released Tuesday that describe a scheme to cheat the admissions process at eight sought-after schools. The parents bribed college coaches and other insiders to get their children into selective schools, authorities said.

At the center of the scheme was admissions consultant William "Rick" Singer, founder of the Edge College & Career Network of Newport Beach, Calif., authorities said. Singer pleaded guilty, and his lawyer, Donald Heller, said his client intends to cooperate fully with prosecutors and is "remorseful and contrite and wants to move on with his life."

Prosecutors said that parents paid Singer big money from 2011 up until just last month to bribe coaches and administrators to falsely make their children look like star athletes, to boost their chances of getting accepted. The consultant also hired ringers to take college entrance exams for students and paid off insiders at testing centers to correct students' answers.

Some parents spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and some as much as \$6.5 million to guarantee their children's admission, officials said.

"These parents are a catalog of wealth and privilege," U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling said.

At least nine athletic coaches and 33 parents were charged. Dozens, including Huffman, the Emmy-winning star of ABC's "Desperate Housewives," were

arrested by midday Tuesday. Huffman posted a \$250,000 bond after an appearance in federal court in Los Angeles. Her husband, actor William H. Macy, has not been charged though an FBI agent stated in an affidavit that he was in the room when Huffman first heard the pitch from a scam insider.

Loughlin turned herself in to the FBI on Wednesday and was scheduled for a court appearance in the afternoon, spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said. Loughlin's husband, fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli, was released in Los Angeles after posting a \$1 million bond.

On Wednesday, a Silicon Valley hedge fund announced that it is replacing its head after he became ensnared in the scandal.

Michael Henriquez, who was also the top executive at investment giant PIMCO until 2016, will be replaced as CEO and chairman of Hercules Capital in Palo Alto, Calif. He was arrested in New York on Tuesday and released on \$500,000 bail. Shares of the hedge fund fell 9 percent.

The coaches worked at schools such as Yale, Stanford, Georgetown, Wake Forest, the University of Texas, the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles.

Stanford's sailing coach, John Vandemoer, pleaded guilty Tuesday in Boston. A former Yale soccer coach pleaded guilty before the documents went public and helped build the case against others.

No students were charged, with authorities saying that in many cases the teenagers were unaware of what was going on.

The colleges themselves are not targets, the prosecutor said. A number of the institutions moved quickly to fire or suspend the coaches and distance their name from the scandal, portraying themselves as victims.

# Compromise seeks a limit on emergency declarations

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House and Republican senators sought compromise on limiting presidents' powers to unilaterally declare national emergencies as chances improved that President Donald Trump might avoid a long-expected rejection by Congress of his effort to divert billions more for building barriers along the Mexican border.

As a Thursday showdown vote in the Senate neared, GOP Sens. Mike Lee, of Utah; Thom Tillis, of North Carolina; and others were talking with the White House about related legislation that would curb the ability of presidents to declare national emergencies. If Trump would commit to signing a bill handicapping future emergency declarations, more GOP senators might support his border emergency declaration in Thursday's crucial vote.

Lee and Tillis were among five GOP senators who met privately Tuesday at the Capitol with Vice President Mike Pence as Republicans sought a way to bolster support for Trump. Since the Democratic House voted last month to block Trump, Senate passage of the resolution rejecting the border emergency would send it to the White House, where it would face a certain veto — Trump's first.

By late Tuesday, there were indications that GOP opposition to Trump's emergency along the Mexican border was softening. If it stands, the declaration would let Trump divert \$3.6 billion from



Tillis

military construction projects to build border barriers, even though Congress had voted to limit him to less than \$1.4 billion for barrier construction in the budget.

Tillis is among four Senate Republicans who have said they would vote with Democrats to oppose Trump's border emergency. At a closed-door lunch Tuesday, Tillis suggested he could be open to backing the president, said two people familiar with his comments. One said Tillis told his colleagues he could change his vote if Trump was indeed ready to curb presidential powers to declare emergencies without Congress' approval.

The two spoke on condition of anonymity to reveal private conversations. A Tillis aide did not return messages left for him. Tillis faces a potentially tough reelection fight next year.

Republicans control the Senate 53-47, meaning that four GOP defections would be enough to send the resolution blocking Trump's border emergency to the White House. The others are Sens. Susan Collins, of Maine; Lisa Murkowski, of Alaska; and Rand Paul, of Kentucky.

Paul said earlier this month that there were "at least 10" GOP senators prepared to oppose Trump's

emergency. But he told reporters Tuesday that he now expects fewer defections. GOP senators are "being beaten up right now" to fall in line, he said.

If the Senate sends the resolution blocking Trump's border emergency to the White House, Congress would be highly unlikely to muster the two-thirds majorities needed to eventually override a veto.

But final congressional approval of the resolution on Thursday would highlight a clash in which Trump was being forced to protect his signature campaign promise — building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border — by vetoing legislation sent to him by a Republican-led Senate. Congress has never before voted to overturn a president's emergency declaration.

Under a 1976 law, presidents have wide discretion in determining when a national emergency has occurred. Congress can vote to block an emergency declaration, but the two-thirds majorities required to overcome presidential vetoes make it hard for lawmakers to prevail.

Lee's proposal says a presidential emergency would last 30 days unless Congress votes to extend it. It would apply to future emergencies, not Trump's current border emergency. A vote on Lee's plan was expected after Congress returns from a recess later this month.

## Manafort sentenced to 3 more years

Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Paul Manafort, President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman, had his prison term extended by 43 months Wednesday at his second sentencing in the case prosecuted by special counsel Robert Mueller.

The new sentence means the former globe-trotting political consultant and Republican campaign stalwart, who turns 70 next month, will spend nearly seven years in prison with the time he already has served.

During the lengthy hearing, Manafort offered an emotional apology to U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson and pleaded for leniency so he could "be together" with his wife.

"I am sorry for what I have done," Manafort said from a wheelchair.

"My behavior in the future will be very different. I have already begun to change," he added, noting that nine months in jail helped him reflect.

But Jackson scolded Manafort before she ruled, saying he "isn't being straight with me now."

about his crimes and had not shown any remorse until his final sentencing.

"Saying, 'I'm sorry I got caught' is not an inspiring plea for leniency," she said.

In the earlier case, U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III last week sentenced Manafort to 47 months in prison for conducting a multimillion-dollar financial fraud.

The criminal scheme extended through the 2016 presidential race but did not involve the Trump campaign that Manafort managed for about three months. Nor did the case directly involve the Kremlin-backed effort to sway the 2016 election, the primary focus of Mueller's investigation.

Jackson appeared irked that Manafort's lawyers repeatedly denied Russian collusion in her court as well.

"Any conspiracy, collusion ... was not presented in this case," the judge said. "Therefore it was not resolved by this case."

The first sentence was widely criticized as lenient, but Ellis said Manafort had led an "otherwise blameless life" because he had no prior criminal record. Ellis

called federal sentencing guidelines that recommended 17 to 24 years in prison "out of whack."

In September, a month after Manafort was convicted in Ellis' court, he pleaded guilty to two related counts of conspiracy in Jackson's court in a plea deal to avoid a second trial. He faced a maximum of 10 additional years in prison for those crimes.

Jackson may have viewed Manafort's conduct more harshly than Ellis. She ordered Manafort to jail in June for reaching out to political fundraisers in his case, and one of his conspiracy counts involved witness tampering.

Jackson also agreed with prosecutors that Manafort voided his plea arrangement by repeatedly lying to Mueller's team and federal grand jury investigating Russia's meddling in the 2016 election.

Manafort made "false statements to the FBI and false statements to the grand jury repeatedly," Andrew Weissmann, the chief prosecutor, told the court Wednesday. "He engaged in crimes over and over again."

## NATION

# FAA slammed for inaction after Boeing jet crash

By RICHARD LARDNER  
AND TOM KRISHER  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration is facing mounting criticism for backing the airworthiness of Boeing's 737 Max jets as the number of countries that have grounded the aircraft grows in the wake of the Ethiopian Airlines crash over the weekend.

The rest of the world typically takes it cues from the FAA, long considered the world's gold standard for aircraft safety. Yet other aviation safety regulators, including the European Union, China, Australia and the United Kingdom, have decided not to wait for the FAA to act.

The Ethiopian disaster came just five months after the deadly crash of another new Boeing 737 Max 8 operated by Lion Air in Indonesia.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said in a statement Tuesday that he's concerned that

international aviation regulators are providing more certainty to the flying public than the FAA.

"In the coming days, it is absolutely critical that we get answers as to what caused the devastating crash of Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 and whether there is any connection to what caused the Lion Air accident just five months ago," DeFazio said.

The FAA has increasingly become cozy with airplane manufacturers and airlines when it should be more proactive in safety, said Bill McGee, aviation adviser for Consumer Reports.

The magazine and website on Tuesday called on airlines and the FAA to ground the 737 Max planes until an investigation into the cause of the Ethiopian crash is completed to see if it's related to the Lion Air crash in October.

"They have not presented any evidence that the problems that we've seen with these two crashes are not problems that could potentially exist here in the U.S.," McGee said.

"Increasingly the FAA is relying more and more on what the



TED S. WARREN/AP

**Boeing Co.'s Renton Assembly Plant in Renton, Wash., is shown on Monday. While several countries have grounded the new Boeing 737 Max 8 jets like that involved in the Ethiopian Airlines disaster, the U.S. has not joined them.**

industry calls electronic surveillance," added McGee, who has written about aviation for nearly two decades. "Not going out and kicking the tires, seeing the work being done, making sure it's being done properly."

Former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood also called for the U.S. to ground the 737 Max, just as his agency halted flights

of another Boeing plane six years ago because of safety concerns.

"These planes need to be inspected before people get on them," LaHood said Tuesday. "The flying public expects somebody in the government to look after safety, and that's DOT's responsibility."

LaHood was Department of Transportation secretary in 2013

when the department grounded the Boeing 787 because of overheating lithium-ion battery packs. The planes were idled for less than a month, until Boeing crafted new fire-resistant compartments around the batteries.

LaHood said current Secretary Elaine Chao should do the same thing with the Max 8, even if it means overruling the FAA.

## Governor places moratorium on Calif. executions

By DON THOMPSON  
*Associated Press*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The 737 inmates on California's largest-in-the-nation death row are getting a reprieve from Gov. Gavin Newsom, who plans to sign an executive order Wednesday placing a moratorium on executions.

Newsom also is withdrawing the lethal injection regulation that death penalty opponents already have tied up in courts and shuttering the new execution chamber at San Quentin State Prison that has never been used.

"The intentional killing of another person is wrong and as governor, I will not oversee the execution of any individual," he said in prepared remarks.

Newsom called the death penalty "a failure" that "has discriminated against defendants who are mentally ill, black and brown, or can't afford expensive legal representation."

He also said innocent people have been wrongly convicted and sometimes put to death.

California hasn't executed anyone since 2006, when Arnold Schwarzenegger was governor. Though voters in 2016 narrowly approved a ballot measure to speed up the punishment, no condemned inmate faced imminent execution.

Since California's last execution, its death row population has grown to house



ERIC RISBERG/AP

**A condemned inmate walks along death row at San Quentin State Prison in California in 2016. Gov. Gavin Newsom planned to sign a moratorium on the death penalty in California on Wednesday.**

one of every four condemned inmates in the United States. They include Scott Peterson, whose trial for killing his wife, Laci, riveted the country, and Richard Laci, who kidnapped 12-year-old Polly Klaas during a slumber party and strangled her.

Newsom "is usurping the express will of California voters and substituting his personal preferences via this hasty and ill-considered moratorium on the death penalty," said Michele Hanisee, president of the Association of Deputy (Los Angeles County) District Attorneys.

While the governor's move is certain to be challenged in court, aides say his power to grant reprieves is written into the state Constitution and that he is not altering any convictions or allowing any condemned inmate a chance at an early release.

## Major storm could bring wind, blizzards, flooding

By JASON SAMENOW  
*The Washington Post*

An unusually strong late winter storm is predicted to intensify explosively in the western Plains on Tuesday into Wednesday, unleashing flooding rains, severe storms, raging winds and blizzard conditions in the middle of the nation.

The zone from Texas north through the Dakotas and Minnesota is expected be hit hardest by the powerhouse storm. It is likely to meet the criteria of a "bomb cyclone," its pressure dropping 24 millibars in 24 hours between Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon. The lower the pressure and the faster it falls, the more intense the storm.

Roaring, potentially damaging winds will roar an enormous area. High wind watches and warnings have been posted from southeastern New Mexico through Nebraska. Gusts are expected to reach 60 mph late Tuesday into Wednesday and up to 100 mph in the high terrain in southwestern Texas and southeastern New Mexico.

"This is a potentially dangerous wind event," warned the National Weather Service office in Midland, Texas.

Models project the storm's pressure to drop to between 970 millibars and 975 millibars as it barrels across Kansas, challenging the lowest pressure recorded in parts of the state.

"Models remain consistent developing

one of the more dynamic systems I have seen in quite some time for Kansas" midweek, wrote a forecaster at the National Weather Service office in Wichita.

The storm was born from a disturbance over the Pacific Ocean that came ashore in northern Mexico on Monday night. It is now expected to ride along the U.S.-Mexico border, ejection from the desert southwest into eastern Colorado and western Kansas into Wednesday.

"As (the) powerful Plains storm reaches maximum intensity or lowest pressure, it will have an 'eye-like' feature similar to a hurricane," tweeted Ryan Maua, meteorologist for Weathermodels.com.

The storm's massive wind field is but one of its many hazards. The storm will also generate heavy precipitation — both rain and snow — and severe thunderstorms depending on location.

Although the storm peaks in intensity Wednesday, it is forecast to produce a swath of strong winds in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes on Wednesday night into Thursday as it cuts through southeast Minnesota and Wisconsin.

A few severe storms could sweep across the South on Thursday, while on the north side, showers will scatter across the eastern Great Lakes, changing to snow over the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and northern Minnesota. By Friday, it will weaken, dragging a cold front across the east, with showers along the I-95 corridor.

## WORLD



# Amid EU warnings, UK seeks to stop a no-deal Brexit

Associated Press

LONDON — Britain and the European Union braced Wednesday for a chaotic, cliff-edge Brexit after U.K. lawmakers rejected the divorce deal that the two sides had agreed upon. Britain's Parliament was to hold votes later that aimed to rule out or postpone a disruptive no-deal departure for Britain from the bloc.

But top EU officials warned the prospect could not be eliminated unless the U.K. Parliament approved some type of exit deal.

"The risk of a no-deal has never been higher," chief EU negotiator Michel Barnier said.

"I urge you please not to underestimate the risk or its consequences," he told European lawmakers in Strasbourg, France.

British lawmakers rejected Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal for a second time on Tuesday, throwing it out by a 391-242 vote. With Brexit set for March 29, just 16 days away, Parliament will vote later Wednesday on whether to rule out leaving the EU on that date without a deal.

Britain and the EU have ramped up planning for a "no-deal" Brexit, which would rip up decades of rules for travel and trade between Britain and the EU. Economists say it could cause huge upheaval, with customs checks causing gridlock at U.K. ports, new tariffs triggering sudden price increases and red tape for everyone from truckers to tourists.

On Wednesday, the U.K. government announced plans for the Irish border after Brexit, saying it wouldn't impose new checks, duties or controls on goods coming from EU member Ireland into Northern Ireland. It also said it wouldn't slap tariffs on most goods coming into Britain from the EU — though there would be new levies on imports of some items including meat and cars.

The British government said

87 percent of imports by value would be tariff-free, a "modest liberalization" compared with current trade rules. A mixture of tariffs and quotas would apply to beef, lamb, pork, poultry and some dairy.

The tariffs, intended to be temporary, wouldn't apply to goods crossing from Ireland to Northern Ireland, raising fears the plan would spark a rise in smuggling across that border.

U.K. Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay told the BBC the government was well-prepared but "no-deal is going to be very disruptive for the economy."

Caroline Fairbairn, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, said the no-deal arrangements would be "a sledgehammer for our economy."

A weakened May, her authority shredded by successive Brexit defeats in Parliament, said her Conservative lawmakers could vote Wednesday according to their conscience rather than having to follow a party line.

If a no-deal Brexit is ruled out, Parliament will vote Thursday on whether to ask the EU to delay Britain's departure.

"The government needs to seek an extension of (Brexit-triggering) Article 50 so that we can have a bit more time to sort things out because, to be honest, we are in such a mess," opposition Labour Party lawmaker Yvette Cooper said.

The EU — openly exasperated by Britain's continuing Brexit crisis — warned that Britain would need to present a strong reason for any extension.

"I am against every extension — whether an extension of one day, one week, even 24 hours — if it's not based on a clear opinion of the House of Commons for something," said the European Parliament's chief Brexit official, Guy Verhofstadt. "Please make up your minds in London, because this uncertainty cannot continue."

## Nigerian school collapses

People help a child after he was rescued from the scene of a three-story school building collapse in Lagos, Nigeria, on Wednesday. The building collapsed while classes were in session, with scores of children thought to be inside. A number of men jumped in to offer assistance, hacksaws and mallets in hand. Sani Datti, a spokesman with Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency, said officials from the agency and other emergency services were at the site. "For now we don't have any word on casualties as we are still busy with rescue work," he said.

## Retrial ordered in Italy after accuser deemed too 'masculine' to be raped

The Washington Post

An Italian appeals court — a panel of three female jurists — acquitted two men of rape in 2017 in part because the judges agreed with the defendants' argument that the victim looked like a man, and therefore they could not have been attracted to her. Now that ruling has been overturned and a retrial has been ordered.

The reasoning behind the appeals court's ruling, revealed Friday through the Italian Supreme Court's retrial order, triggered outrage over the weekend. Hundreds of people on Monday protested outside the appeals court in Ancona, the city of 100,000 on Italy's Adriatic coast where the alleged rape occurred.

The case dates to 2015, when a 22-year-old woman reported that she had been attacked. In 2016, the men were convicted. The woman's injuries were, accord-

ing to doctors, consistent with rape, and her blood showed a high level of benzodiazepines, a type of tranquilizer, seemingly backing up her lawyer's claim that her drinks had been spiked at a bar after an evening class.

In 2017, the appeals court in Ancona overturned the conviction after the female judges agreed with the defendants' argument that the victim looked "too masculine" after seeing a photo of her.

The judges wrote that it was "not possible to exclude the possibility that it was" the alleged victim who organized the evening at which she was drugged and raped. The judges noted that one man "didn't even like the girl, to the point of having stored her number in his phone under the nickname 'Viking,'" an allusion to an anything but feminine figure, rather a masculine one.

The victim was not present at the appeals court hearing be-

cause she had returned to her native Peru. The victim's lawyer, however, called the judges' reasoning "disgusting" and filed an appeal to the Supreme Court.

"It was disgusting to read; the judges expressed various reasons for deciding to acquit them, but one was because the [defendants] said they didn't even like her; because she was ugly," Cinzia Molinaro, the woman's lawyer, told the Guardian.

Molinaro said her client moved back to Peru because of how the community reacted when she came forward against the two men.

Rebel Network, the Italian women's rights group behind Monday's protest, tweeted: "Rape does not fulfill a desire for pleasure, but an abominable hatred and contempt for the victim. It does not depend on how feminine you are, but on the hatred inside the rapist."

Associated Press

**MELBOURNE, Australia** — The most senior Catholic convicted of child sex abuse was sentenced Wednesday to six years in prison for molesting two choirboys in an Australian cathedral in a crime the judge said showed "staggering arrogance."

Cardinal George Pell, 77, must serve a minimum of three years and eight months before he is eligible for parole, according to the judge's order. The five convictions against Pell carried a maximum possible sentence of 10 years each.

Pope Francis' former finance minister was convicted by a unanimous jury verdict in December of orally raping a 13-year-old choirboy and indecently dealing with the boy and the boy's 13-year-old friend in the late 1990s, months after Pell became archbishop of Melbourne. A court order had suppressed media reporting of the news until last month.

Pell denies the allegations and will appeal his convictions in the

Victoria Court of Appeal on June 5. It was not immediately clear if he will also appeal the sentence.

For the first time in Pell's many court appearances since he returned to Australia from the Vatican to face abuse charges, Pell wore an open-necked shirt without a cleric's collar. He was also not wearing a cardinal's gold ring, which might reflect strict rules on jewelry in the state penal system.

In explaining his sentencing decision, the judge said Pell had led an "otherwise blameless life." Kidd said he believed given Pell's age and lack of any other crimi-

nal record, the cardinal posed no risk of reoffending. But the judge also said that Pell had abused his position of power and had shown no remorse for his crimes. Kidd described the assaults as egregious, degrading and humiliating to the victims.

Pell showed no emotion during the hourlong hearing and barely moved throughout. Pell signed documents that registered him for life as a serious sexual offender before he was led from the dock by four prison officers.

In a statement, one of Pell's victims called the judge's sentence "meticulous and considered."

"It is hard for me, for the time being, to take comfort in this outcome," the man said in a statement read outside court by one of his lawyers, Vivian Waller. "I appreciate that the court has acknowledged what was inflicted upon me as a child. However, there is no rest for me. Everything is overshadowed by the forthcoming appeal."

Pell was 55 and had recently established a compensation plan for Melbourne's victims of clergy abuse when he abused the two boys at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1996.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## 'Meatless Mondays' program expands

**NY** NEW YORK — There will be no mystery meat (or any other meat) on Mondays at New York City public schools.

That's because the city is expanding its "Meatless Mondays" program in the fall.

The initiative will provide the system's 1 million students with all-vegetarian breakfast and lunch menus every Monday.

Advocates say it promotes healthy, environmentally friendly meal options.

School nutrition experts will get students' feedback before the menus are finalized.

## Deputies: Man shot during fight over snoring

**FL** COCOA BEACH — Authorities in Florida said a woman shot her boyfriend during an argument about his loud snoring.

News outlets reported that when the Brevard County sheriff's deputies arrived at the couple's home recently they were told the shooting was accidental.

But as they investigated, they found that the shooting happened during an argument between Lorie Morin, 47, and her boyfriend. As the argument escalated, deputies said Morin got a shotgun and fired at her boyfriend. Deputies said the two were fighting about his snoring.

The man was taken to a hospital, where he was listed in stable condition.

## Officers, K-9s visit girl with brain tumor

**WI** HARTLAND — A 7-year-old girl with a potentially fatal brain tumor got a boost of support from some furry law enforcement officers.

Emma Mertens loves dogs, so more than 30 human officers with their K-9 partners paid Emma a visit at her home in Hartland. The officers came from across southeastern Wisconsin to surprise the girl over the weekend.

West Allis Police Officer Rick Orlowski told WTMJ-TV that Emma's eyes "were the size of saucers" when the officers pulled up.

A family friend posted a request on social media for people to send photos of their dogs. Emma's family said she has since received thousands of letters and photos from around the world.

## Mayor's beloved dog dies after cross-country trip

**MA** ATTLEBORO — A Massachusetts mayor's dog that became known for her cross-country journey after a cancer diagnosis has died.

The Sun Chronicle reported Attleboro Mayor Paul Heroux announced on Facebook that Mura the Japanese wolf dog died Saturday. Mura's death prompted an outpouring of sympathy online, with more than 1,600 users posting messages of condolences.

Heroux and Mura gained international attention when he took her on the cross-country trip last year.

## THE CENSUS

# 30

**The number of lottery tickets a Virginia woman purchased with the same numbers to win \$150,000.**  
Deborah Brown said she purchased 20 Pick 4 tickets with the numbers 1-0-3-1 after seeing those numbers "a couple of times during the day." She then bought 10 more because she was really feeling it. The number combination won the Feb. 11 drawing and each ticket was worth \$5,000.



JAIME GREEN, THE WICHITA (KAN.) EAGLE/AP

## Crash landing

Only minor injuries were reported after a small plane crashed into a home in Benton, Kan., after it left the runway while landing at nearby Lloyd Stearman Field on Monday. The Wichita Eagle reported a licensed student was piloting the post-World War II plane with an instructor when it crashed into the porch of an empty house, which sustained structural damage. The old military observation airplane is now privately owned, according to the newspaper.

## Bronze sculptures, tools stolen from artist

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — Nearly a dozen bronze sculptures were stolen from a Louisiana artist.

NOLA.com/the Times-Picayune reported that Covington artist Bill Binnings said he discovered the art missing and the tools stolen Saturday. The original pieces were taken from his studio and foundry in Waldheim.

Binnings said the sculptures were valued at around \$47,000. He said about \$2,000 worth of tools were missing.

Binnings said the stolen pieces show dancers, a mother and child and others. Each piece is about 2 feet or less and has his signature carved into it.

## Eatery chain marks 50th with redesign

**WY** CHEYENNE — A Wyoming-based fast-food franchise is acknowledging its roots for its 50th anniversary.

Taco John's has grown to nearly 400 locations in 26 states since two businessmen bought the franchise rights to a food-trailer business in 1969.

CEO Jim Creel told the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle the company also will introduce a food truck. Taco John's got its start as a taco trailer at Cheyenne Frontier Days in 1968.

## Authority demolishes Civil War-era log cabin

**MI** DETROIT — The Detroit Land Bank Authority demolished a log cabin just outside the city that archaeologists recently discovered and believe may have been built before the Civil War.

The Detroit News reported that the authority tore down the cabin in Hamtramck on Feb. 22.

Greg Kowalski, chairman of the Hamtramck Historical Museum, said he'd hoped to relocate the cabin to a park in front of City Hall.

Land bank spokeswoman Alyssa Strickland said the author-

ity was following procedure. She said the preservationists' plans for the cabin were incomplete and the authority was protecting taxpayer investments.

## Truck involved in crash was carrying missiles

**WA** SPOKANE — Idaho State Police said a semitruck that crashed on Interstate 90 on Friday night was carrying 16,200-pound missiles.

The Spokesman Review reported the driver, Mark W. Dearinger, 47, of Chickasha, Okla., was cited for inattentive driving. He was not injured in the crash.

State police said Dearinger drove through an eastbound Idaho Transportation Department checkpoint and drove into a hazard containment area by accident instead of merging back on to I-90. He drove to the end of the containment area and over a large snowbank, disabling the truck.

Fairchild Air Force Base assisted emergency personnel by sending three explosive ordnance disposal technicians to the scene,

although the truck involved did not have a direct relationship with the base.

## Agency probes video of man tackling pelican

**MD** DAVIDSONVILLE — The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is working to determine what charges might be appropriate to bring against a Maryland man who was videotaped tackling a federally protected pelican.

The Baltimore Sun reported Hunter Hardesty, of Davidsonville, posted the video of the apparent attack online Thursday. Commission officer and spokesman Bobby Dube said authorities are considering possible animal cruelty charges.

The video shows Hardesty leaning over the water near the edge of a harbor that's geotagged to the Florida Keys. It shows him then jumping off the harbor and landing on top of the pelican.

From wire reports

## FACES

# More story left to tell

HBO doc 'The Case Against Adnan Syed' picks up where heralded podcast left off



HBO photos

Adnan Syed's arrest photo. The new HBO documentary "The Case Against Adnan Syed" is a follow-up to the podcast "Serial," which became a pop cultural phenomenon and the fastest podcast to reach 5 million downloads and streams in iTunes history.

BY YVONNE VILLARREAL  
*Los Angeles Times*

**S**erial," the addictive real-life murder-mystery podcast, was already riding its wave as a pop cultural phenomenon by the time Oscar-nominated filmmaker Amy Berg hopped on the bandwagon.

Released in October 2014 and anchored by reporter Sarah Koenig, the first season of the weekly investigative yarn revisited the 1999 murder of a Baltimore high school student, Hae Min Lee, and the person convicted of killing her, her ex-boyfriend Adnan Syed.

Its questioning of whether Syed was guilty of the crime gripped listeners (it became the fastest podcast to reach 5 million downloads and streams in iTunes history), spawned a brigade of armchair detectives and Reddit threads, and made podcasts mainstream in a way no other had before — even "Saturday Night Live" took notice.

Berg was captivated by "Serial" at first listen. She's a veteran of the genre as director of acclaimed true-crime documentaries such as "Deliver Us From Evil," about sex abuse in the Catholic Church, and "West of Memphis," about the wrongful conviction of the West Memphis Three.

"The podcast was my best friend on all my trips," Berg recited in a recent interview. "Whenever I had a flight, I was so excited because I could get through three or four episodes. I was completely addicted to it."

The ending, though, left her frustrated.

"I was wanting more information," she explained. "It was like, maybe he didn't do it or maybe he did. I felt it was building up toward this ending and all of a sudden we just didn't know what happened at the end. I spent a lot



Hae Min Lee and Adnan Syed at their junior prom. Syed was convicted in Lee's 1999 murder and is serving a life sentence. Syed's conviction was overturned in the wake of "Serial's" popularity, but Maryland reinstated his conviction last week.

of time sleuthing around."

In fact, she's spent about three years sleuthing around.

The result is the four-part HBO documentary "The Case Against Adnan Syed." The premiere aired Sunday, on the heels of the 20th anniversary of Syed's imprisonment. The documentary revisits some of what "Serial" covered while also picking up where it left off, filling in gaps, revealing new evidence, and examining the racial aspects of the case. And it puts a face to many of the voices heard in the podcast.

The documentary arrives as the Maryland Court of Appeals determined Friday that Syed was not deserving of a new trial, reinstating his conviction. Syed's conviction was overturned in 2016 and a new trial was ordered in the wake of "Serial's" popularity.

**I was wanting more information. It was like, maybe he didn't do it or maybe he did. I felt it was building up toward this ending and all of a sudden we just didn't know what happened at the end. I spent a lot of time sleuthing around.**

**Amy Berg**

filmmaker, on her reasons for making a documentary about Adnan Syed's case

Maryland appealed and won. Adnan, now 38, is serving a life sentence at North Branch Correctional Institution in Cumberland, Md.

The documentary faces another challenge: the HBO series comes nearly five years after public interest in the case was at its peak and is tasked with bringing something dynamic to a case many followers feel they know.

Maintaining public interest is a key focus for Chaudry, whose quest to get the case attention all those years ago when she reached out to Koenig was coincidentally spurred after having watched Berg's "West of Memphis."

"When you have a journalist or a documentary or some other outside investigator looking, it helps a great deal," she noted.

Berg had access to Syed, his defense team and his family. The documentary also features interviews with friends, classmates and teachers of both Lee and Syed, including Asia McClain, Syed's former classmate who believes she saw him in the library the afternoon Lee was murdered (a new trial would have allowed for her testimony to be heard); and Aisha Pittman, Lee's best friend.

One of the main things Berg says she wanted to accomplish in the documentary was bringing Lee to life. The opening minutes of the first installment features an animation of Lee reading passages from her diary courtesy of a voice-over actor:

"I wanted to bring her to life as a young woman who had a life in front of her," Berg noted. "I really spent a lot of time reading her journal entries and trying to get a sense of who she was — she was a very athletic, strong young woman. We wanted to show her as who she really was with all the color and feistiness and love and all the passion in her heart, as well as just visualizing her properly."

Although Syed's conviction was reinstated, the fight continues for his supporters. Even before the ruling came through, Berg was skeptical the sought-after new trial would materialize.

"I got to this place where I realized he's never going to get a new trial," she said. "No matter what happens, these appeals will run out. That's not going to give us the ending that we had hoped for. Maybe this film is his trial. I don't know. I think that it really examines things that you would see in a trial if there was one today."

## Styles, Monae will present at Rock Hall

From wire reports

Rock goddess Stevie Nicks will be ushered into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for a second time by former One Direction heartthrob Harry Styles, while David Byrne will handle the welcoming in of English rock band Radiohead and Queen's Brian May will do the same for English heavy metal band Def Leppard at the ceremony at Barclays Center in Brooklyn on March 29.

Janelle Monae is on tap to give the induction speech for Janet Jackson, Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor will do the honors for The Cure, Duran Duran's John Taylor and Simon LeBon will deliver the speech for Roxy Music and the Bangles' Susanna Hoffs will bring in the Zombies.

Nicks is being inducted for her solo career, putting her among a small number of artists inducted more than once, and she is the first female artist elected to the Hall twice. She was inducted with Fleetwood Mac in 1998.

The annual induction ceremony will be taped and highlights of the speeches and accompanying performances saluting each of the inductees will be compiled into an HBO special slated to premiere on the cable channel on April 27.

## Other news

■ **Kesha** is the headliner of the LOVELOUD Festival, the LGBTQ+ event founded by Imagine Dragons frontman Dan Reynolds, on June 29 in West Valley City, Utah. Martin Garrix, Tegan & Sara, Laura Jane Grace, Daya and K. Flay also will perform at the event.

■ **Hugh Jackman** is returning to Broadway as a classic roguish traveling salesman. Producer Scott Rudin said Wednesday the two-time Tony winner will star in a revival of the Meredith Willson musical "The Music Man" starting in September 2020. As con man Harold Hill, Jackman will sing such favorites as "Ya Got Trouble" and "Seventy-Six Trombones." This will be the third revival of the beloved show. Others who have played Hill include Craig Bierko, Eric McCormack, Dick Van Dyke and Robert Preston, whose performance remains enshrined in Broadway legend, not to mention the 1962 film version.

■ A private gift from **Joni Mitchell** will arrive in bookstores this fall. "Morning Glory On the Vine: Early Songs and Drawings" will be published Oct. 22, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt announced. The book collects materials the singer-songwriter assembled in the early 1970s and sent to friends — just 100 copies, all signed. The release this year will include a new introduction by Mitchell, 75, and additional paintings not included in the original edition. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt will also publish a signed, limited edition of "Morning Glory On the Vine."

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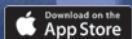
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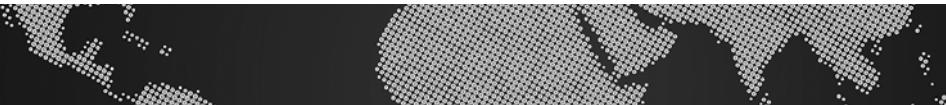
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BY DOYLE McMANUS

*Los Angeles Times*

**J**oe Biden beamed from ear to ear in a Washington hotel ballroom Tuesday as firefighters chanted "Run, Joe, Run!"

"Save it a little longer," the former vice president told the union members. "I might need it in a few weeks."

He may need more than that.

Biden's not-yet-announced campaign already has hit bumps on the road to the White House: unsought reminders of the twists and turns of his nearly half a century in politics. If Biden runs, he will argue that he has the experience necessary to be president. But it's also his biggest handicap.

Biden has been a U.S. senator, vice president or former vice president for 46 years — longer than many voters have been alive. He thus carries a weight no other candidate must bear: the burden of history. His toughest opponent might be his own past.

Decades ago, Biden often took positions that were in his party's mainstream at the time, but have since been overtaken by changing public attitudes. In the 1970s, he opposed busing to desegregate schools. In the 1980s, he pushed tough sentences for drug crimes. Later he supported free trade agreements and voted in favor of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Last week, The Washington Post published a front-page story that cited a Delaware newspaper interview from 1975, when Biden was a first-term U.S. senator.

"I don't feel responsible for the sins of my father and grandfather. I feel responsible for what the situation is today, for the sins of my own generation. And I'll be damned if I feel responsible to pay for what happened 300 years ago," Biden said in a long explanation of his opposition to busing.

Biden's comments escaped national notice at the time. But his opposition to busing was no secret; The Post reported on it at least three times since 1987.

But they likely were new to many readers, especially anyone younger than 40, and they sounded discordant amid current debates on racial justice and reparations.

Biden hasn't changed his views that busing was a bad way to achieve desegregation, a policy that has fallen into disuse in most of the country. He has a strong record on civil rights in virtually every other respect, broad support among black voters — and served as vice president under the country's first black president.

"When it comes to Biden's standing on civil rights, I'd defer to Barack Obama," Richard A. Harootian, a South Carolina state senator who's long been a Biden supporter, told me.

On other issues, Biden has changed with the times. He once opposed gay marriage and voted for the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. But as vice president, he publicly helped Obama toward supporting same-sex unions.

Sometimes Biden has gone back and forth. He voted for the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement, then switched sides and declared himself "a fair trader." As vice president, he flipped back to support Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership.

"You can't judge people by what they did 50 years ago," Harootian argued. "To measure what they said then by today's standards is just wrong."

But all that evolution poses a problem for a presidential campaign, even if the candidate's explanations are convincing. If Biden steps into a debate with a dozen other Democrats, he'll have a big target on his back. Bernie Sanders can savage him for accepting campaign contributions from bank executives. Elizabeth Warren can de-

ounce his support for the 2005 law that made it more difficult for people to declare bankruptcy. Kamala Harris can question his vote to endorse George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq.

An ancient rule in politics: If you're explaining, you're losing.

Every controversy will remind voters that Biden, 76, has been around a long time. He's not the fresh face most Democrats have told pollsters they want to see in the race. He can't claim to be an outsider.

Even Biden's appeals to civility sometimes make him sound like a throwback. A few weeks ago, he praised Vice President Mike Pence as "a decent guy." After gay rights activists complained, Biden apologized and withdrew the compliment — but he doesn't sound happy about it.

"Mean pettiness has overtaken our politics," he told the firefighters. "I get criticized for saying anything nice about a Republican. Folks, that's not who we are."

It's a noble sentiment, but it's a reminder that Biden represents an older tradition.

Biden still enjoys enormous strengths as the race begins. He leads every poll of potential Democratic candidates. While most of his rivals are leaning left, he has a strong base in the party's moderate wing, which includes most Democratic voters. His favorability rating in the party is stratospheric — 76 percent in a Monmouth University poll this month, higher than any other candidate.

But favorability can melt away in the heat of a campaign, as Hillary Clinton found in 2016. Biden could see his past overshadow his efforts to set a path for the future. If he jumps in the race, Biden will face a cruel irony: His hard-won experience no longer counts as a virtue; it may be his downfall.

Doyle McManus is a Washington columnist for The Los Angeles Times and director of the journalism program at Georgetown University.

## Ensure the 'special relationship' survives Brexit

BY ARTHUR I. CYR

*Special to Stars and Stripes*

**H**ere is a book you should have, Mr. Director." With that, Jacqueline Kennedy handed CIA Director Allen Dulles a copy of "From Russia with Love" by Ian Fleming, the latest novel in the series featuring lethal British agent James Bond.

Their 1957 encounter in Palm Beach, Fla., reflects the continuing close cooperation between government professionals in Britain and the United States. The term "special relationship" aptly describes the understanding.

Our partnership began during the darkest early period of World War II, and is rooted in national intelligence operations. This bears directly on the current effort by Britain's government to withdraw from the European Union, known as "Brexit."

Peter Gross recounts the conversation between Kennedy and Dulles in his important book, "Gentleman Spy," a comprehensive biography of Dulles, who was a world-class networker. That skill was important to his rise to the top of the highly competitive world of intelligence. Kennedy's husband had emerged as a serious contender for the 1960 Democratic presidential nomination.

President John F. Kennedy's fondness for Bond novels sparked the durable movie franchise. The Hollywood Bond's fetish for high-tech equipment, however, contrasts with the Bond of Fleming's novels.

Both Dulles and Fleming served as intelligence officers during World War II. That war began extremely close cooperation between American and British intelligence.

Earlier, British intelligence work was crucial in persuading the U.S. government to intervene in World War I. British agents intercepted the so-called "Zimmermann Note," a German government cable describing plans to develop alliance with Mexico, and London shared the alarming document with Washington. That plus German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare against Allied shipping tipped the balance in favor of the U.S. declaration of war.

During Fleming's World War II service in New York, he described for Bill Donovan, head of embryonic U.S. intelligence, the sort of personality to direct a new operations office in that city. Dulles, who fit Fleming's profile perfectly, was hired.

Dulles later managed operations in Switzerland, a neutral meeting ground for agents of the Allies and Axis. A vast cast of characters in between encompassed fanatics, fools, fraudsters, dedicated patriots, geniuses and skilled operatives. Electronic surveillance existed, but the working environment and challenges were overwhelmingly human.

The British led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill were anxious to secure vital American economic and military assistance, but were initially extremely careful about collaboration on military matters, in particular regarding sharing of sensitive information. United States success in breaking Japanese military codes proved to be an extremely important, timely development. The British became steadily more confident about the partnership and forthcoming about collaboration. Alliances are always challenging enterprises, as Churchill liked to emphasize, and in this

case intelligence was key.

The ugly as well as complex nature of human intelligence operations naturally encourages the alternative of using electronic information gathering and surveillance. American fondness for and skill at technology has led us to embrace this approach, during but especially following World War II. The British are relatively more committed to the use of human agents and means.

An important but under-discussed dimension of Brexit is the impact on defense and security cooperation in Europe. Jonathan Evans and John Sawers, former heads respectively of MI5 and MI6, Britain's intelligence agencies, have said that loss of shared data and general collaboration against Brexit.

Pauline Neville-Jones, a former national security adviser, warned Brexit could weaken police cooperation and border security, perhaps encouraging renewed Northern Ireland violence. Even Theresa May before becoming prime minister noted the EU facilitates such collaboration.

Beyond NATO, there is the important "Five Eyes" intelligence network, which includes Australia, Canada and New Zealand along with the United Kingdom and the United States. In the future, this partnership could be strengthened, and perhaps made more formal.

If Britain actually leaves Europe, the U.S. should pursue new bilateral intelligence collaboration efforts. Ideally, our strong bias toward technological means would shift.

Arthur I. Cyr is Clausen Distinguished Professor at Carthage College and author of "After the Cold War."

## BUSINESS/WEATHER

# Facebook sees growth with its message apps

## Company wants to be leader in payments, more

By ANICK JESDANUN  
AND RACHEL LERMAN  
Associated Press

Facebook, already the leader in enabling you to share photos, videos and links, now wants to be a force in messaging, commerce, payments and just about everything else you do online.

The company's ambitions harken to how WeChat has become the centerpiece of digital life in China, where people use it to order movie tickets, subway passes, food delivery and rides. If Facebook succeeds in turning its own messaging services into a platform for everything, it could ultimately threaten established services such as Snapchat, Yelp, Venmo, eBay and even Apple and Amazon.

"It's clear that Facebook does have very broad ambitions here," said Bob O'Donnell, president and chief analyst at Technalysis Research. "Their goal is to be the WeChat of everywhere but China."

But Facebook faces numerous hurdles. A key one is restoring user trust, following a string of privacy failures that includes the sharing of personal information from as many as 87 million users with a consulting firm affiliated with Donald Trump's presidential campaign. And any change may cause users to rethink their relationship with Facebook.

"Facebook has a lot of momentum but it's not completely invin-



Uber. People use WeChat to buy goods in stores, split restaurant bills with friends, pay utility bills, donate to charities and hail rides.

Facebook already lets people send money to other individuals through Messenger in the U.S. and a few other countries and is testing payments through WhatsApp in India. The New York Times reported that Facebook is also developing its own digital currency to make it easier for users to send money to their messaging contacts.

**Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is promoting an ambitious agenda of change for the social media giant that would vastly expand its services to everything from encrypted messaging to making payments.**

cible," said Roger Kay, an analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates. "People came to Facebook for a particular thing. Offer them a different thing, and they're likely to re-evaluate whether they want to be there at all."

After all, Friendster and MySpace came and went as Facebook grew. Yahoo and AltaVista moved over for Google. And remember when AOL was popular, powerful and rich enough to buy the traditional media company Time Warner?

After building an advertising-supported service that depends on vacuuming up data on your hobbies, interests and political views, CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced last week that Facebook will now emphasize ways for

small groups to communicate in a truly private fashion.

That involves scrambling all messages in WhatsApp, Instagram Direct and Messenger so that even Facebook can't read them. Facebook will also let messages automatically disappear after a set amount of time, something Snapchat already does.

Facebook, Zuckerberg said, will "then build more ways for people to interact on top of that, including calls, video chats, groups, stories, businesses, payments, commerce and ultimately a platform for many other kinds of private services."

Facebook declined to further elaborate on its ambitions. But there are clues in what Chinese tech giant Tencent has already

done with WeChat in China. WeChat combines functions that are typically done by separate companies elsewhere — think of Facebook and its messaging services combined with PayPal and

### EXCHANGE RATES

	Military rates
Euro costs (March 14)	\$1.1594
Dollar buys (March 14)	€0.8625
British pound (March 14)	£0.95
Japanese yen (March 14)	¥122.00
South Korean won (March 14)	₩1,104.00

	Commercial rates
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.3187
Canada (Dollar)	1.3322
China (Yuan)	0.1595
Denmark (Krone)	6.5975
Egypt (Pound)	17.4198
Finland (Euro)	1.1307
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8499
Hungary (Forint)	276.28
Israel (Shekel)	3.6133
Italy (Euro)	1.1235
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3040
Norway (Krone)	8.5984
Poland (Zlote)	5.56
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7595
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3594
South Korea (Won)	1,131.28
Switzerland (Franc)	1.0059
Thailand (Baht)	31.61
United Arab Emirates (Dirham)	5.4615

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities. Commercial rates are for the Netherlands, South Korea, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Philippines. Purchasing British pounds in Germany, check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are bank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currency to U.S. dollars. The euro is represented by the symbol €, and the euro, which is represented in dollars-to-euro.)

### MARKET WATCH

March 12, 2019

Dow Jones industrials	96.22
	25,554.66
Nasdaq composite	32.97
	7,591.03
Standard & Poor's 500	8.22
	2,791.52
Russell 2000	0.95
	1,549.83

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



#### THURSDAY IN EUROPE



#### FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.



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Some of the latest scam fads are:

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People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

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Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual obligations between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.

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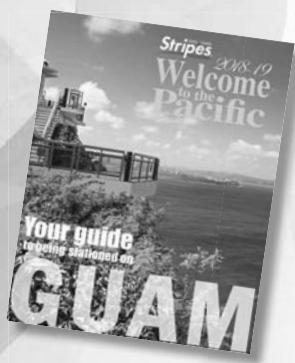
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# SCOREBOARD

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## College hockey

### Conference tournaments

#### ATLANTA HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

##### Quarterfinals (Best-of-three)

Wednesday, March 13

RIT at Sacred Heart

Friday, March 14

RIT at Sacred Heart

**Friday, March 15**

Army at Northeastern International

Robert Morris at Bentley

RIT at Quinnipiac (if necessary)

Niagara at Air Force

**Sunday, March 17 (if necessary)**

Army at Northeastern International

Robert Morris at Bentley

Niagara at Air Force

**AT BUFFALO, N.Y.**

**Semifinals**

**Friday, March 15**

Highest-remaining seed vs. lowest-re-

maining seed

**Championship**

**Saturday, March 23**

Army at Northeastern International

Robert Morris at Bentley

RIT at Quinnipiac (if necessary)

Niagara at Air Force

**Sunday, March 16**

Army at Northeastern International

Robert Morris at Bentley

RIT at Quinnipiac (if necessary)

Niagara at Air Force

**AT BUFFALO, N.Y.**

**Semifinals**

**Friday, March 15**

Highest-remaining seed vs. lowest-re-

maining seed

**Championship**

**Saturday, March 24**

Lower-seeded winner at higher-seeded

winner

**ECAC**

**Quasars (Best-of-three)**

**Friday, March 15**

Dartmouth vs. Brown

Brown at Quinnipiac

Yale at Clarkson

Union at Cornell

**HIXSON EAST**

**First Round (Best-of-three)**

**Friday, March 15**

Maine at Northeastern

Boston College at Providence

New Hampshire at UMass Lowell

Brown at UMass Lowell

Saturday, March 16

Maine at Northeastern

Boston College at Providence

New Hampshire at UMass Lowell

Sunday, March 17 (if necessary)

Boston University at UMass Lowell

Yale at Clarkson

Union at Cornell

**HIXSON WEST**

**First Round (Best-of-three)**

**Friday, March 15**

Colorado College at Western Michigan

Michigan at St. Cloud State

North Dakota at Denver

**Saturday, March 16**

Colorado College at Western Michigan

Michigan at St. Cloud State

North Dakota at Denver

**Sunday, March 17 (if necessary)**

Colorado College at Western Michigan

Michigan at St. Cloud State

North Dakota at Denver

**WCHA**

**First Round (Best-of-three)**

**Friday, March 8**

Lake Superior State 4, Bemidji State 2

North Dakota 3, St. Cloud State 2

**Saturday, March 9**

Lake Superior State 4, Bemidji State 2

North Dakota 3, St. Cloud State 2

**Sunday, March 10 (if necessary)**

Boise State at Colorado College

Lake Superior State at Minnesota State

**First Round (Best-of-three)**

**Friday, March 15**

Bowling Green 4, Michigan Tech 2

BU at Colorado College

Minnesota State 3, Alabama Huntsville 1

Lake Superior State 3, Bemidji State 1

LSSU advances 2-0

North Dakota 4, Alaska 3, NMU

advances 2-0

Bowling Green 6, Michigan Tech 2

BU at Colorado College

Minnesota State 3, Alabama Huntsville 1

LSSU advances 2-0

North Dakota 4, Alaska 3, NMU

advances 2-0

Bowling Green 6, Michigan Tech 2

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## NFL

## Deals: Browns suddenly look like power in AFC North

## FROM BACK PAGE

Beckham is known for his gravity-defying catches and breakaway skills, but also for being temperamental. He was suspended for one game in 2015 for his on-field battles with cornerback Josh Norman, then with Carolina.

Cleveland suddenly looks like a force in an AFC North in which both Baltimore and Pittsburgh have been weakened in the offseason. With Beckham reunited with receiver Jarvis Landry, a teammate at LSU, it gives quarterback Baker Mayfield two top targets. The Browns, who went 7-8-1 last season after not winning a game in 2017, haven't made the playoffs since 2002.

The mega-trade came hours after another busy day of dealmaking.

The money flowed out of New Jersey, with the Jets agreeing Tuesday to contracts with three players: wide receivers Jamison Crowder and Josh Bellamy, and linebacker C.J. Mosley. The team also will re-sign cornerback Darryl Roberts and defensive end Henry Anderson.

But the big news came when the Jets and Bell agreed on a deal. ESPN first reported the signing, saying the contract is for four years and \$52.5 million.

The deal gives new coach Adam Gase and second-year quarterback Sam Darnold a big-time playmaker, arguably the best player at his position before Bell opted to sit out all of last season rather than sign a franchise tender with Pittsburgh.

Bell has rushed for 5,336 yards and 35 touchdowns, and has 312 catches for 2,660 yards and seven scores as one of the most versatile and dangerous offensive players in the NFL.

"I'm back in the green bayb," the former Michigan State star wrote on Twitter. "Let's get it."

It streamed out of Green Bay, with the Packers getting deals with edge rusher Za'Darius Smith, linebacker Preston Smith, safety Adrian Amos and offensive lineman Billy Turner. The Packers also cut veteran linebacker Nick Perry.

And it poured out of Oakland once more when the Raiders kept their vault open and agreed to a four-year contract with safety Lamaricus Joyner. The Raiders previously made big moves on offense by free agent Brown and agreeing to a deal with tackle Trent Brown.

Given the "legal tampering" freedom the league now allows for two days, well, let Ravens general manager Eric DeCosta describe the mayhem.

"Unfortunately for us, the market is irrational at times and we can't be held responsible for what other teams want to pay," DeCosta said. "All we can do is try to negotiate in good faith with agents and the players."



NICK WASS, RIGHT/AP

Edge rusher Za'Darius Smith left the Baltimore Ravens for a \$66 million, four-year contract with the Green Bay Packers.

## Jets

The Jets have more than \$82.5 million to spend in free agency, and they are spending it. They thought they also had an agreement with Vikings linebacker Anthony Barr, but he opted instead to return to Minnesota.

Not that the Jets fell short in adding talent. The 26-year-old Mosley is a four-time Pro Bowl linebacker who will get a reported five years and \$85 million, including a whopping \$51 million guaranteed. Mosley has had at least 100 tackles in every season but 2016, when he missed two games with an injury and finished with 92. He will be a centerpiece of new defensive coordinator Gregg Williams' unit.

In dire need of receivers for Darnold, New York is adding the 26-year-old Crowder as a playmaking slot receiver. Crowder, whose deal reportedly is for three years and \$28.5 million, had 221 catches for 2,628 yards and 14 touchdowns in four seasons with Washington. He was limited to nine games last season because of an

## ankle injury.

Bellamy has 76 career catches for 999 yards and five touchdowns, and is also a special teams contributor. He spent the last five years with Chicago.

## Packers

The defensive signings should improve a unit that ranked 18th in the NFL in 2018. Za'Darius Smith is getting the biggest deal: \$66 million over four years with \$34.5 million in the first two years, according to his agency, SportsTrust Advisors. The 28-year-old Smith led the Ravens with 8½ sacks last season — including three in one game against Tennessee — and has 18½ in his 58-game career.

Preston Smith agreed to a \$52 million, four-year contract with \$16 million guaranteed. For Amos, it is a \$37 million, four-year contract. Amos, 25, started all 16 games for the NFC North rival Chicago Bears last season and had two interceptions.

Turner gets a \$28 million, four-year contract.

## Raiders

Joyer becomes the first major addition on defense in Oakland. He played last season on a franchise tag for the Rams, earning \$11.3 million. But Los Angeles signed Eric Weddle last week to be Joyner's replacement.

The 28-year-old Joyner was originally a second-round pick by the Rams in 2014 and played 67 games over five seasons with the franchise. He has four interceptions and 25 passes defensed in his career.

## Ravens

It's been a difficult two days for the Ravens. Za'Darius Smith, Mosley, Weddle and long-time star Terrell Suggs (Cardinals) all departed from their top-ranked defense.

"We see good, young players leave us every year," DeCosta said. "We've tried to adjust over time, but I think now is a great opportunity for us to become financially responsible, to get control over the salary cap to understand the concept of right player, right price."



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## NBA

## Roundup

# Murray leads Nuggets' charge

Associated Press

DENVER — Jamal Murray scored 19 of his 30 points in the second half, Mason Plumlee dished out eight of Denver's season-high 40 assists and the Nuggets cruised to a 133-107 victory over the banged-up Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

Called out by coach Michael Malone after a lackadaisical performance at Golden State last week, the Nuggets' starting unit responded by playing with more intensity.

Paul Millsap finished with 23 points, including a buzzer-beater from half-court to end the third quarter. Nikola Jokic added 18 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to help Denver snap a two-game slide at Pepsi Center.

The Nuggets are hanging on to the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 34 points and 10 rebounds to pace a Timberwolves team that's fading from playoff contention. Towns did a little bit of everything to keep the Timberwolves close until Denver pulled away in the third quarter. He had one play where he quickly applied the brakes to free from Jokic and then stepped back to hit a long jumper. Towns grinned on his way back down the floor.

Minnesota was light on guards with Derrick Rose (right elbow), Jeff Teague (left foot) and Andrew Wiggins (left quadriceps) all sidelined. The depleted guard situation meant more court time for Cameron Reynolds, a rookie out of Tulane who recently signed a second 10-day contract. He had 12 points in 25 minutes.

The starters for the Nuggets were a combined plus-78. This after going minus-95 against the Warriors.

At practice Monday, Malone had a heart-to-heart with his squad. He asked them what they wanted to achieve as they marched toward their first postseason appearance since 2012-13 — simply settle for getting in or challenge for the top seed? At 28-6, the Nuggets have the best home record in the Western Conference.

"I didn't give them a chance (to answer)," Malone said. "I said, 'I'm tired of talking. All we do is talk, talk, talk — let's start doing.'"

**Lakers 123, Bulls 105:** LeBron James had 36 points and 10 rebounds, and Los Angeles overcame a 20-point deficit to beat host Chicago and end a five-game losing streak.

James played 33 minutes and showed no signs of letting up with the Lakers barely hanging on in the playoff race. He took over after the Lakers' 14-point lead was cut to four with 8:38 left, making a jumper and then on the



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

**Nuggets guard Jamal Murray drives the lane past Timberwolves guard Tyus Jones during the second half Tuesday in Denver.**

next possession going through the lane for a thunderous dunk.

**Bucks 130, Pelicans 113:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 24 points and Milwaukee used a 45-point third quarter to pull away from host New Orleans.

Khris Middleton had 23 points, Malcolm Brogdon added 18, and Eric Bledsoe and former Pelicans forward Nikola Mirotic each scored 14 for the Bucks.

**7ers 106, Cavaliers 99:** Ben Simmons scored 26 points, Joel Embiid had 19 rebounds and made some big plays down the stretch, and host Philadelphia held off Cleveland.

Collin Sexton led the Cavaliers with 26 points, including a layup with 3:10 left that pulled Cleveland within one. Cedi Osman added 18 and put the Cavs ahead 97-96 with under 3 minutes to go as boos rained down in Philly.

**Spurs 112, Mavericks 105:** DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points, LaMarcus Aldridge added 28 and San Antonio beat host Dallas.

DeRozan and Aldridge had identical 11-for-19 shooting lines from the field and combined to go 17-for-17 from the foul line. The Spurs led from the middle of the first quarter on.

**Pacers 103, Knicks 98:** Bojan Bogdanovic scored 24 points and Darren Collison made two free throws 19.5 seconds left to help host Indiana slip past New York.

Indiana snapped its two-game losing streak and remained tied with Philadelphia for the No. 3 spot in the Eastern Conference. Collison finished with 16 points.

**Trail Blazers 125, Clippers 104:** CJ McCollum scored 35 points, Jusuf Nurkic and Damian Lillard added 20 apiece and Portland snapped host Los Angeles' five-game winning streak.

McCollum, who was 12-for-21 from the field and made six three-pointers, took control of the game during the fourth quarter as the Trail Blazers broke things open with a 21-point run.

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

#### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	48	20	.706	—
Philadelphia	43	25	.632	—
Boston	41	27	.589	1
Brooklyn	36	32	.522	12½
New York	33	35	.486	—

#### Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	43	25	.589	—
Charlotte	30	39	.429	13½
Washington	28	39	.418	3½
Atlanta	25	40	.388	9

#### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	51	17	.750	—
Chicago	43	25	.600	8
Detroit	42	26	.515	7
Indiana	19	50	.275	32½
Cleveland	17	51	.250	34

### Western Conference

#### Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	26	22	.543	—
San Antonio	39	29	.574	3½
New Orleans	30	40	.429	13½
Memphis	31	38	.455	10
Dallas	27	40	.403	15

#### Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	41	26	.612	3½
Oklahoma City	41	26	.612	3½
Portland	37	37	.500	7
Minnesota	32	36	.471	13

#### Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	51	11	.862	—
LA Clippers	39	36	.565	7½
Memphis	33	33	.500	10
LA Lakers	31	35	.464	12
Phoenix	16	52	.235	30

#### X-cinched play-off

#### Tuesday's games

	Indiana	New York	Phoenix	Portland	Utah
Portland	33	10	11	19	11
San Antonio	34	11	12	19	11
Orlando	36	11	12	20	11
Oklahoma City	33	11	12	20	11
Sacramento	30	11	12	20	11
Memphis	31	11	12	20	11
Golden State	30	11	12	20	11

#### Wednesday's games

	Brooklyn	Orlando	Washington	Phoenix	Memphis	Atlanta	Golden State	Houston
Brooklyn	20	28	30	29	27	26	25	23
Orlando	28	20	30	29	27	26	25	23
Washington	27	20	30	29	27	26	25	23
Phoenix	26	20	29	29	27	26	25	23
Memphis	25	20	29	29	27	26	25	23
Atlanta	24	20	29	29	27	26	25	23
Golden State	23	20	29	29	27	26	25	23
Houston	22	20	29	29	27	26	25	23

#### Thursday's games

	Indiana	New York	Phoenix	Portland	Utah	Memphis	Atlanta	Golden State	Houston
Indiana	33	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
New York	34	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Phoenix	32	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Portland	31	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Utah	30	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Memphis	29	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Atlanta	28	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Golden State	27	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Houston	26	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12

#### Friday's games

	Charlotte	Washington	Philadelphia	Brooklyn	Phoenix	Memphis	Atlanta	Golden State	Houston
Charlotte	23	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Washington	22	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Philadelphia	21	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Brooklyn	20	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Phoenix	19	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Memphis	18	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Atlanta	17	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Golden State	16	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Houston	15	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12

#### Saturday's games

	Indiana	New York	Phoenix	Portland	Utah	Memphis	Atlanta	Golden State	Houston
Indiana	35	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
New York	36	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Phoenix	35	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Portland	34	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Utah	33	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Memphis	32	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Atlanta	31	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Golden State	30	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Houston	29	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12

#### Sunday's games

	Indiana	New York	Phoenix	Portland	Utah	Memphis	Atlanta	Golden State	Houston
Indiana	36	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
New York	37	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Phoenix	36	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Portland	35	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Utah	34	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Memphis	33	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Atlanta	32	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Golden State	31	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Houston	30	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12

#### Monday's games

	Indiana	New York	Phoenix	Portland	Utah	Memphis	Atlanta	Golden State	Houston
Indiana	37	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
New York	38	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Phoenix	37	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Portland	36	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Utah	35	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Memphis	34	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Atlanta	33	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Golden State	32	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12
Houston	31	11	12	19	11	12	19	11	12

## NBA/SPORTS BRIEFS

# Mitchell, Jazz take Westbrook's side

BY TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

NBA star Russell Westbrook will play in Utah again one day. When he does, a fan who allegedly made racial taunts against him will not be there to watch.

A day after the Oklahoma City Thunder standout directed vulgar comments — which were captured on video and went viral — toward two fans, the Utah Jazz responded by banning a fan from their arena. Westbrook also got support from Jazz star Donovan Mitchell, who said it wasn't the first time a racially motivated event happened at a Jazz game.

"The Utah Jazz will not tolerate fans who act inappropriately," the Jazz said in a statement. "There is no place in our game for personal attacks or disrespect."

Westbrook was fined \$25,000 for "directing profanity and threatening language to a fan." In the video, which was posted to Twitter by The Deseret News, Westbrook is seen on the sideline near the Thunder bench saying "I'll [bleep] you, you and your wife."

The comment, and threatening a woman, is not a good look for the image-conscious NBA — especially since it came from a former Most Valuable Player and one of the game's biggest stars. But Westbrook, who has had multiple angry in-game exchanges with fans, insisted that Monday night's video during a 98-89 Oklahoma City win over the Jazz told only one side of the story. He said he was responding to a racial taunt, and not for the first time in Salt Lake City.

"Every time I come here, a lot of disrespectful things are said," Westbrook said. He added that he has never physically abused a woman and never would.

The man Westbrook was shouting at during the game, identified as Shane Keisel, denied saying anything improper or profane. The Jazz did not name Keisel in their statement announcing the ban, and a phone number for him rang unanswered.

What exactly happened is unclear, but some of Westbrook's peers in the NBA came to his defense Tuesday, saying fans who sit near players in many arenas now feel emboldened to say things that would be described as disrespectful or worse. Mitchell said he will devote some time in the coming months to try to combat racial inequality. The most recent population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show that about 2 percent of Utah's population is black, the lowest percentage of any state that has a major pro sports team.

"Racism and hate speech hurts us all, and this is not the first time something like this has happened in our arena," Mitchell said. "The Utah that I have come to love is welcoming and inclusive, and last night's incident is not indicative of our fan base."

Westbrook has had run-ins with fans before — and reacted

calmly last month when it appeared he was touched by a child sitting courtside. Others have not been as pleasant, and Denver's Will Barton said he believes fans know they can get a reaction from Westbrook.

"They know he's going to react a little bit or might say something," Barton said. "Now I feel like every time he goes on the road, they're picking at him. I don't know what the league can do, but some of those fans are out of control."

In a social media age, anything can be captured by cameras. TMZ Sports obtained video last week of New York Knicks owner James Dolan at Madison Square Garden where he heard a fan that he was walking past yell "Sell the team." Dolan told the fan he was rude, asked if he wanted to come to any more games and then told him to "enjoy watching them on TV."

Fans boo. That's expected and even encouraged in arenas. But unlike games in the NFL, NHL and Major League Baseball, fans in the best seats in NBA arenas sit only a few inches from the playing surface, the coaches and the players — with no obstruction between them. On occasion, some coaches have even seen engaging in conversations with fans during games.

Sometimes, the banter is friendly. Often, it is not.

"It's great having fans into their home team, and taunting and that noise level in great arenas, opposing places, is awesome," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "That's what you want. But you don't need to cross the line and say something that you would never say if you were walking up to one of these guys on the street."

One of the league's lowest moments came Nov. 19, 2004, during a game between Indiana and Detroit. Tensions boiled over on the floor after a hard foul led to some pushing and shoving, and then fans became involved — a drink was thrown at the Pacers' bench, prompting Metta World Peace (then known as Ron Artest) to climb into the stands. A melee ensued, and nine players were suspended.

Nothing to that extreme has happened since, though incidents between players and fans are hardly uncommon.

There is a fan code of conduct at all NBA games, including a part that says guests "will enjoy the basketball experience free from disruptive behavior, including foul or abusive language or obscene gestures." Violators are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and each team handles things its own way. At the Utah game Monday night, some fans were issued warning cards but allowed to return to their seats.

Keisel told Salt Lake City television station KSL that he told Westbrook to "sit down and ice your knees, bro." Westbrook claimed that Keisel said "get down on my knees like you're used to."



JOSH REYNOLDS/AP

A Massachusetts court on Wednesday reinstated the murder conviction of former New England Patriot Aaron Hernandez, right. After Hernandez committed suicide in prison, a judge threw out his conviction, citing state law involving deceased defendants who were appealing their cases.

## Briefly

# Hernandez conviction restored

Associated Press

BOSTON — Aaron Hernandez's murder conviction was reinstated Wednesday in a sweeping ruling from Massachusetts' highest court that does away with the legal principle that made the former NFL star innocent in the eyes of the law after he killed himself in prison.

The Supreme Judicial Court unanimously found that the legal rule that erased Hernandez's conviction is "outdated and no longer consonant with the circumstances of contemporary life." It ordered that Hernandez's conviction be restored and that the practice be abolished for future cases. The ruling does not affect past cases.

Hernandez was convicted in 2015 of killing semi-professional football player Odin Lloyd. Two years later, the 27-year-old killed himself in his prison cell days after being acquitted of most charges in a separate double-murder case.

A judge threw out Hernandez's conviction that year, citing the legal principle that holds that a defendant convicted at trial who dies before an appeal is heard should no longer be considered guilty in the eyes of the law, thereby returning the case to its pretrial status. The prosecution then appealed, seeking to have the conviction reinstated.

Under the doctrine, rooted in centuries of English law, a conviction should not be considered final until an appeal can determine whether mistakes were made that deprived the defendant of a fair trial, legal experts say.

How states handle cases such as Hernandez's varies widely. Some, like Massachusetts, toss the convictions, while other states dismiss the defendant's appeal and the conviction stands. Others allow appellate courts to consider a dead defendant's case, prosecu-

tors said.

The district attorney whose office prosecuted Hernandez's case applauded the court's decision.

"We are pleased justice is served in this case, the antiquated practice of vacating a valid conviction is being eliminated and the victim's family can get the closure they deserve," Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III said in a tweet.

Prosecutors argued that the legal doctrine is outdated and unfair to victims. Quinn told the court that the defendant's estate should be allowed to appeal the case, if they wish. Otherwise, the conviction should stand, he argued.

Under the new rule laid out by the court, the conviction will stand, but the court record will note the conviction was neither affirmed nor reversed because the defendant died while the appeal was pending.

Other high-profile Massachusetts criminals whose convictions have been erased after their deaths include John Salvi, who was convicted of killing two abortion clinic workers and wounding five other people during a shooting rampage in Brookline in 1994.

Roman Catholic priest John Geoghan, a key figure in the clergy sex abuse scandal that rocked the Boston archdiocese and spread across the globe, also had his child molestation conviction vacated after he was beaten to death in 2003 in his cell at the same Massachusetts maximum-security prison where Hernandez died.

## Bills add receivers Brown, Beasley

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The free-spending Buffalo Bills are using their sizeable salary-cap space to pursue quarterback Josh Allen

an overhauled offense entering his second season.

The Bills continued their major foray into free agency on Tuesday by agreeing to sign receivers John Brown and Cole Beasley and offensive linemen Ty Nsekhe and Jon Feliciano.

## Nationals adding lefty reliever Sipp

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — A person familiar with the deal tells The Associated Press that left-handed reliever Tony Sipp and the Washington Nationals have agreed in principle on a one-year contract that guarantees \$1.25 million and includes a mutual option for 2020.

The 35-year-old Sipp is entering his 11th season. He has a 25-20 career record with a 3.67 ERA and 513 strikeouts in 482 2/3 innings. Cleveland, Arizona and Houston all in relief.

Last season with the Astros, Sipp was 3-1 with a 1.86 ERA, holding lefty hitters to a .191 batting average.

## Kansas, fired coach Beatty at odds over \$3M

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Former Kansas football coach David Beatty said Tuesday he was suing the school's athletic department in federal court, alleging breach of contract and seeking \$3 million he contends he is owed after he was fired in November. The Jayhawks said they are withholding the money pending an NCAA investigation into possible violations by the former coach.

Beatty was let go with three games left last season but finished the year to end his tenure with a 6-42 record in four seasons. The woeful program did end a 46-game road losing streak under Beatty.

# COLLEGE BASKETBALL



KATHY WILLENS/AP

Villanova forward Eric Paschall reacts as he looks at the score in the waning minutes of Saturday's game against Seton Hall. The Wildcats still enter this week's Big East Tournament as the top seed.

## Victorious yet vulnerable

Typical deep run in NCAAs might not be in cards this year for defending national champ Villanova

By DAN GELSTON  
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Villanova pulled into campus following a 100-mile ride from New Jersey still digesting a loss in the Big East finale to Seton Hall.

Coach Jay Wright hit the back of the bus for his standard pep talk and detail the schedule for the week, highlighted by a date at Madison Square Garden.

His agenda should have included a peek at the out-of-town scoreboard.

While he talked, the No. 25 Wildcats were big winners — Big East champions again. The surprising title came when Georgetown knocked off Marquette as the Wildcats took a silent ride down the turnpike and again gave the defending national champion Wildcats the No. 1 seed in this week's conference tournament.

"When I came back to the front of the bus, for us all to get off, we found out Georgetown had won," Wright said. "We didn't even address it. We were still soaking in our performance from Saturday."

Well, soak in this: In a season where the Wildcats lost four players to the NBA, their first-year players were more bust than breathtaking and they were upset by teams they would normally romp past, Villanova is not only alive and well, it's coming for a third straight Big East Tournament title.

The Wildcats (22-9, 13-5) walk off the court flashing the "V" sign with their fingers after each win, but for the first time in years, it could stand for vulnerable.

"We're still a work in progress but we feel good," Wright said.

Work in progress?

This has traditionally been the time of the season when the Wild-

**'We're still a work in progress but we feel good.'**

Jay Wright  
Villanova coach

cats work toward progressing deep into the NCAA Tournament. But Wright has kept the Wildcats together even as they:

- Navigated the losses of Jalen Brunson, Omari Spellman, Donte DiVincenzo and Mikal Bridges.
- Saw freshmen Jahvon Quinerly, Brandon Slater, Cole Swider and graduate transfer Joe Cremo slug through injury and ineffectiveness.

- Lost consecutive home games to Michigan and Furman; lost to Penn for the first time since 2002; and lost to five Big East teams after losing only four games all season each of the last two years.

- Lost three straight games for the first time since 2012-13.
- Felt the loss of top assistant Ashley Howard to the head coach job at La Salle.

The negatives might not matter much if the Wildcats can clip down the nets at the Garden. They play on Thursday against the winner of the Providence-Butler game, and the Wildcats went 4-0 against those teams.

Wright pulled off one of his best jobs on the bench, a caveat that comes with the 2016 and 2018 national championship banners hanging from the rafters, not to mention the 10th anniversary of his first Final Four in 2009.

"It was a different job," Wright said. "You never know from the outside what a team goes through in the inside. But this was a really good group. A young group. But a relatively easy group to coach."

Phil Booth, a two-time national champion, and Eric Paschall have eased the burden of a youth movement by absolutely carrying the Wildcats in the second half to big wins. The senior stars both average in the 35-minute range and are 1-2 in scoring. Wright has mostly used a seven-man rotation and let Booth and Paschall lead the way down the stretch to win critical games, turning to his reliable rotation stars rather than newbies.

"Did we develop our freshman class as much as we'd like? No," Wright said. "But do we feel good about them going forward? Yes."

Booth, Paschal, Saddiq Bey — the only freshman who has shown flashes of productivity — Collin Gillespie and Jermaine Samuels will start. Dhamir Cosby-Roundtree and Cremo are his top two reserves off the bench.

Wright said the first-year players struggled in part compared to other previous fantastic freshmen such as Brunson and Chicago Bulls guard Ryan Arcidiacono because "they didn't have as many upperclassmen around them."

"Everybody's career is different," Wright said. "They might not be as ready this year, but I think they will be. They'll have really good careers, all of them. They just weren't maybe as ready as some of the other guys."

The national championship repeat seems like a longshot, but against a bland Big East, those "Vs" could be flashed again from atop a ladder.

## Scoreboard

### Men's conference tournaments

#### America East Conference

At High Point University Schools

Semifinals

Tuesday, March 12

UMBC 92, Stony Brook 77

Vermont 84, Binghamton 51

Championship

Wednesday, March 13

Vermont vs. UMBC

American Athletic Conference

At Cincinnati, Tenn.

First Round

Thursday, March 14

South Florida vs. East Carolina

Quarterfinals

Friday, March 15

Houston 82, Cincinnati 60

UConn 75, Memphis/Tulane

Cincinnati vs. Tulsa/SMU

Temple vs. Cincinnati/Georgia

Atlantic Coast Conference

At Charlotte, N.C.

First Round

Tuesday, March 12

North Carolina State 71

Pittsburgh 70, Boston College 70

Second Round

Wednesday, March 13

N.C. State vs. Clemson

Virginia Tech vs. Miami

Louisville vs. Notre Dame

Syracuse vs. Pitt/Tulane

Atlantic Sun Conference

At Charlotte, N.C.

First Round

Thursday, March 14

Ridge Island vs. La Salle

George Washington vs. Boston/Mass

Duquesne vs. Saint Joseph's

Saint Louis vs. Richmond/Fordham

Big South Conference

At New York

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

George Washington vs. UMass

Richmond vs. Fordham

Big South Conference

At Charlotte, N.C.

First Round

Thursday, March 14

Villanova vs. Providence/Butler

Xavier vs. Creighton

Marquette vs. St. John's/DePaul

Seton Hall vs. Georgetown

Big East Conference

At Boise, Idaho

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

Northern Arizona vs. Sacramento St.

Southern Utah vs. Idaho State

Montana St. vs. Weber State

Big South Conference

Sunday, March 10

Gardner-Webb vs. South Carolina

Big Ten Conference

At Chicago

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

Northern Arizona vs. Sacramento St.

Southern Utah vs. Idaho State

Montana St. vs. Weber State

Big South Conference

Sunday, March 10

Gardner-Webb vs. South Carolina

Big Ten Conference

At Chicago

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

TCU vs. Oklahoma State

Oklahoma vs. West Virginia

Quarterfinals

Thursday, March 14

Baylor vs. Iowa State

Kansas State vs. Oklahoma/Ukoma

Texas Tech vs. Oklahoma/West Virginia

Big 12 Conference

At Kansas City, Mo.

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

TCU vs. Oklahoma State

Oklahoma vs. West Virginia

Quarterfinals

Thursday, March 14

Baylor vs. Iowa State

Kansas State vs. Oklahoma/Ukoma

Texas Tech vs. Oklahoma/West Virginia

### Mid-American Conference

At Cleveland

Quarterfinals

Thursday, March 14

Buffalo vs. Akron/Miami

Kent St. vs. Central Michigan/Western Michigan

Toledo vs. Northern Illinois/Ohio

Youngstown Green vs. Eastern Michigan/Ball State

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference

At Atlantic, Va.

First Round

Monday, March 11

Delaware vs. Morgan State St. 67

Tuesday, March 12

Coppin St. vs. Morgan St. 71

SC State vs. Morgan State Shore 54

Quarterfinals

Wednesday, March 13

Norfolk State vs. Morgan St. 67

N.C. A&T vs. Coppin State 70

First Round

Monday, March 11

Howard vs. Bethune-Cookman

Missouri Valley Conference

At Cleveland

First Round

Sunday, March 10

Bradley 57, Northern Iowa 44

Mountain West Conference

At Las Vegas

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

Boise State vs. Colorado State

New Mexico vs. Wyoming

Fresno State vs. Air Force/San Jose St.

Northeast Conference

At New Haven, Conn.

First Round

Tuesday, March 12

Fairleigh Dickinson vs. Saint Francis

Championship

Saturday, March 9

Murray State 75, Saint Francis 65

Pacific-12 Conference

At Las Vegas

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

Southern Cal vs. Arizona

Colorado vs. Stanford

UCLA vs. Stanford

Oregon vs. Washington State

Washington State vs. Arizona

Thursday, March 14

Washington vs. Southern Cal/Arizona

Oregon vs. Stanford

Friday, March 15

Colgate at Bucknell

Southeastern Conference

At New Haven, Conn.

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

Georgia vs. South Carolina

Georgia vs. Vanderbilt

Second Round

Thursday, March 14

Tennessee vs. Mississippi

Mississippi State vs. Texas A&M-Vanderbilt

Second Round

Friday, March 15

Florida vs. Arkansas

Auburn vs. Missouri/Georgia

Mississippi State vs. Texas A&M-Vanderbilt

Second Round

Southern Conference

Championship

Monday, March 11

Wofford 74, University of South Carolina 58

Southland Conference

At Austin, Texas

First Round

Wednesday, March 13

Lamar vs. Houston

Texas A&M-Commerce vs. Central Arkansas

Wednesday, March 13

Southwestern Athletic Conference

First Round

Tuesday, March 12

Alabama 49, Grambling State 49

Prairie View 59, Arkansas 49

Alabama Southern 65, Texas Southern 66

Texas Southern 65, Grambling State 60

At Birmingham, Ala.

Semifinals

Friday, March 15

Prairie View vs. Grambling State

Texas Southern vs. Alabama

At Birmingham, Ala.

Finals

Wednesday, March 13

At Birmingham, Ala.

West Coast Conference

Championship

Tuesday, March 12

Saint Mary's (Cal) 60, Gonzaga 47

Western Athletic Conference

Championship

Wednesday, March 13

At Las Vegas

First Round

Thursday, March 14

New Mexico vs. Chicago State

Texas Rio Grande Valley vs. Cal State

Bakersfield vs. UMKC

Friday, March 15

Grand Canyon vs. Seattle

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## Saint Mary's stuns Gonzaga for WCC title



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Saint Mary's Jordan Hunter, right, and Malik Fitts celebrate after their team defeated Gonzaga 60-47 in the West Coast Conference Tournament championship on Tuesday in Las Vegas.

## Conference tournaments roundup

## Northeastern tops Hofstra for Colonial's NCAA bid

Associated Press

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. — When Northeastern saw its large lead fading in the Colonial Athletic Association Tournament finals again, the Huskies flashed back to their failure from a year ago and all the hard work they had put in since.

"We learned from that situation," Huskies guard Shawn Ooccus said. "And now we're sitting here today."

Northeastern is sitting once more as CAA Tournament champions after Vasa Pusica had 21 points off seven three-pointers and helped his team regroup after blowing a double-digit lead to defeat top-seeded Hofstra 82-74 on Tuesday night.

The situation was so eerily similar to the 2018 finals. Northeastern led College of Charleston by 17 in the second half, then watched the Cougars cut down the nets after an 83-76 loss.

"Without that loss maybe we wouldn't be in this position right now," said Pusica, named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player.

The second-seeded Huskies (23-10) won the league's automatic NCAA Tournament berth for the second time in five seasons and ninth time in school history.

"Are we off the one line?" Northeastern coach Bill Coen joked when asked about

possible seeding.

"We're so excited to be included and so excited to play wherever they send us," he said.

It didn't appear Northeastern was heading anywhere but back home with another disappointment when Hofstra (26-8) opened the second half with a 28-12 run to tie things at 54-all on Jacqui Taylor's two foul shots with more than nine minutes left.

That's when the senior Pusica took charge. His fourth three-pointer put the Huskies back in front. Pusica added another long-range basket three minutes later for a 56-58 lead. By the time he made his sixth 3, Northeastern led 71-60. Pusica screamed in celebration, one hand and his teammates held high in for almost a year.

"I'm not sure I have the words to describe tonight," Coen said.

Hofstra, as the CAA regular-season champions, has a guaranteed spot in the NIT. The Pride were seeking their first NCAA berth since 2001 when Villanova coach Jay Wright led Hofstra.

**Northern Kentucky 77, Wright State 66:** Northern Kentucky earned an NCAA Tournament bid for the second time in three years.

Dantez Walton had 15 points and 14 rebounds for his first double-double, leading

the second-seeded Norse to the Horizon League Tournament championship.

The Norse had a solid showing two years ago, losing to second-seeded Kentucky 79-70, and yet they don't plan to simply show up and play in the NCAA Tournament.

The Norse (26-8) had control of the entire league tournament final with four starters and a reserve scoring in double figures, less than 24 hours after McDonald made a game-winning, buzzer-beating three-pointer against Oakland. Jalen Tate scored 17 points, Zaynah Robinson had 15 points off the bench.

**Fairleigh Dickinson 85, St. Francis (Pa.) 76:** Darnell Edge scored 21 points, Kaleb Bishop and Jahil Jenkins added 20 points apiece, and Fairleigh Dickinson earned its second trip to the NCAA tournament in four years by winning the Northeastern Conference Tournament championship.

The second-seeded Knights (20-13) shot 64 percent (30-for-47) from the field and beat the top-seeded Red Flash (18-14) on the road for the second time this season. Fairleigh Dickinson's starters accounted for all 85 of its points. Elyjah Williams and Mike Holloway Jr. scored 12 points each for Fairleigh Dickinson, which used a 17-8 run to close the first half to take control and never let St. Francis get closer than

pace in round three against Gonzaga, bogging down the Zags' offense and forcing them into difficult shots. Gonzaga struggled to get anything to fall, open or not, scoring a season-low 24 points by halftime and missing six of its seven three-point attempts.

"Gonzaga likes to get out and run, they feed off energy," Ford said. "It was kind of like a home game for them and we had to slow the tempo."

The Gaels had a hard time containing Krebs. The junior, who averages 8.9 points per game, had 13 by halftime to push the Gaels to a 27-24 lead. Saint Mary's did it with second-leading scorer Malik Fitts limited to less than a minute because of foul trouble.

Saint Mary's continued to bog down Gonzaga and Fitts scored eight quick points to open the second half. The Gaels extended the lead to 48-41 with 7 1/2 minutes left and answered every time Gonzaga tried to make a run.

"They were mucking it up a little bit, getting into lanes and we just didn't make shots," said Gonzaga guard Josh Perkins, who had 10 points, four assists and five turnovers.

## Big picture

Saint Mary's played arguably its best game of the season at the best possible time. Now it's on to the NCAA Tournament.

Gonzaga was never able to speed the Gaels up and rev up their high-scoring offense, showing a weakness that could be exploited.

Saint

Mary's

controlled the



Mic Smith/AP

**Hofstra's Justin Wright-Foramen, right, and Northeastern's Shawn Ooccus fight for control of the ball on Tuesday in North Charleston, S.C.**

three points in the second half.

**North Dakota State 73, Omaha 63:** Vinnie Shahid helped his teammates' advice after a rough first half, and helped North Dakota State back to the NCAA Tournament.

Shahid scored 20 of his 22 points after halftime, and the Bison won the Summit League Tournament to earn their first NCAA Tournament bid since 2015.

# SPORTS



## Stunner

Saint Mary's upsets Gonzaga to win WCC tournament» **Page 31**

### NFL

The Giants traded Odell Beckham Jr. to the Browns for safety Jabrill Peppers as well as first- and second-round draft picks.

JASON E. MICZEK/AP



# BIG DEALS

## Beckham, Bell get new teams

By BARRY WILNER  
Associated Press

While the free agency spending frenzy runs wild, the Giants and Browns found a way to overshadow it Tuesday night: a trade of Odell Beckham Jr.

Not to be outdone, however, the Jets got the guy at the top of their free agency list, agreeing with former Steelers running back Le'Veon Bell on a deal early Wednesday morning.

The Giants are sending their star receiver to Cleveland for first- and second-round draft picks in April and safety Jabrill Pep-

pers in the second blockbuster trade in four days. On Saturday, Pittsburgh sent unhappy wideout Antonio Brown to Oakland, a deal Brown forced.

Beckham is the NFL's highest-paid receiver; he got a five-year, \$90 million extension last August. He comes off two injury-plagued seasons, but when healthy it is a game-breaking target, just like Brown.

The two deals became official Wednesday when the league's business year began. People with knowledge of the moves told The Associated Press of the trades, speaking anonymously because the transactions weren't announced until after 4 p.m. EDT.

**SEE DEALS ON PAGE 27**



PETER DIANA, PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/TNS

Running back Le'Veon Bell agreed to what ESPN said is a four-year, \$52.5 million deal with the Jets. Bell sat out all of last season after Pittsburgh placed the franchise tag on him and he refused to sign it.

Nuggets whip banged-up Timberwolves

**NBA, Page 28**

Gaudreau's hat trick propels Flames

**NHL, Page 26**

